

# New electoral arrangements for Somerset Council Final Recommendations

March 2026

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## A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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# Introduction

## Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.<sup>1</sup> We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Beverley Smith (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Wallace Sampson OBE
- Liz Treacy
- Janet Waggott
- Ailsa Irvine (Chief Executive)

## What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as further guidance and information about electoral reviews and the review process in general, can be found on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Why Somerset?

7 In 2021, the then Secretary of State agreed to create a new unitary local government structure for the Somerset county area. The existing Somerset County Council and the districts of Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West & Taunton and South Somerset were abolished, and a new single-tier unitary authority of Somerset was created.

8 A shadow authority was established towards the end of 2021 with interim electoral arrangements. The new authority held its first elections in May 2022, with the expectation that the Commission would conduct a full electoral review before the subsequent elections in 2027.

9 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The divisions in Somerset are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across Somerset.

## Our proposals for Somerset

10 Somerset should be represented by 96 councillors, 14 fewer than there are now.

11 Somerset should have 93 divisions, 38 more than there are now.

12 The boundaries of all divisions should change.

13 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Somerset.

## How will the recommendations affect you?

14 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which division you vote in, which other communities are in that division, and, in some cases, which parish council ward you vote in. Your division name may also change.

15 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Somerset Council or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account

parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices or car and house insurance premiums, and we are not able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

## Review timetable

16 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Somerset. We then held two periods of consultation with the public on division patterns for Somerset. The submissions received during consultation have informed our final recommendations.

17 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
15 October 2024	Number of councillors decided
22 October 2024	Start of consultation seeking views on new divisions
4 March 2025	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
3 June 2025	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
11 August 2025	Second consultation closes
25 November 2025	Second consultation reopens
14 January 2026	End of second consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
3 March 2026	Publication of final recommendations



## Analysis and final recommendations

18 Legislation<sup>2</sup> states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors<sup>3</sup> there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our divisions.

19 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create divisions with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

20 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2024	2031
Electorate of Somerset	446,698	467,270
Number of councillors	96	96
Average number of electors per councillor	4,653	4,867

21 When the number of electors per councillor in a division is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the division as having 'good electoral equality'. All but two of our proposed divisions for Somerset are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2031.

## Submissions received

22 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Electorate figures

23 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2030, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2025. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 5%.

24 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our final recommendations. Given our decision to reopen the

<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

consultation on our draft recommendations, the publication year of our final recommendations changed from 2025 to 2026. However, we are content that these figures can still be used as a reasonable estimate of forecast elector numbers for 2031, so we have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

25 Our mapping tool uses geocoded electoral registers supplied by the Council to locate electors, by associating addresses with specific geographic coordinates. It considers each elector's location to produce precise elector counts for each ward. There can be very slight differences between the electorate figures published on our website at the beginning of the review and the electorate figures published in this report. However, these are very minor and do not impact on our recommendations.

## Number of councillors

26 Somerset Council currently has 110 councillors. We looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded that decreasing this number by 14 to 96 will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

27 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of divisions that would be represented by 96 councillors.

28 We received several submissions during the course of the review relating to the overall number of councillors, some of which argued for a further reduction and others stating that the proposed reduction would hamper representation. However, having carefully considered the evidence received, we remain unpersuaded by the arguments put forward that changing the total number of councillors from 96 would enable the authority to carry out its roles and responsibilities in a more effective manner. We remain satisfied that a council size of 96 will ensure the Council can discharge its functions effectively, both now and in the future, and so our final recommendations are based upon a 96-member council.

## Single-councillor and multi-councillor divisions

29 If a council formally requests that an electoral review be conducted as a single-member division review, there is a presumption in legislation<sup>4</sup> that the Council have a uniform pattern of single-councillor divisions. Accordingly, we will aim to deliver this pattern of divisions. However, in all cases this consideration will not take precedence over our other statutory criteria, and we will not recommend a uniform pattern of single-member divisions if, in our view or as is shown in evidence provided to us, it is not compatible with our other statutory criteria.

30 In their submission on the number of councillors, Somerset Council stated that:

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<sup>4</sup> Section 57 of Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

*'Wherever possible, there is a preference for predominantly single-member wards to ensure that there is clear accountability for local communities, as set out in the Unitary Business Case. However, we recognise that one size does not fit all and there would be circumstances where multi-member wards may be more appropriate.'*

31 We had interpreted the above as constituting a formal request from the Council for single-member divisions under the legislation and proceeded with the review on this basis. However, in their submission made during consultation on the draft recommendations, the Somerset Liberal Democrats stated that the Council had only expressed a preference for single-member divisions, not a formal request for a uniform pattern under the legislation that guides our work.

32 A formal request would have required us to deliver a uniform pattern of single-member divisions, subject to persuasive evidence showing that it would not be compatible with our statutory criteria, which are outlined in paragraph 4. Without such a request, we have the flexibility of recommending a mixture of multi- or single-member divisions, dependent on which pattern provides the best balance of those criteria.

33 Following reconsideration, we concluded that our draft recommendations had been based on an incorrect understanding of the Council's position which, in our view, may have affected how consultees approached the review. We therefore reopened the consultation on our draft recommendations for a further eight-week period in November 2025 to ensure a fair and informed process, with the Council's preference correctly reflected. This would enable consultees to submit multi-member patterns where they may have been previously dissuaded from doing so on the assumption that we would only consider a single-member division pattern. While the Somerset Liberal Democrats did not consider it necessary to reopen the consultation, we judged that clarification on the matter was essential to ensure consultees could respond on an accurate basis.

34 In their second submission, the Somerset Liberal Democrats reiterated that they did not consider it necessary to revisit the wider question of single- and multi-member divisions, stating that a consistent pattern of single-member divisions remains appropriate unless a compelling reason exists to depart from it.

35 We have carefully assessed our final recommendations in light of the clarified position and all the evidence received during consultation. We have given equal consideration to single- and multi-member division options, evaluating each on its individual merits against the statutory criteria, while remaining mindful of the Council's preference for predominantly single-member divisions. Where consultation responses provided persuasive evidence supporting multi-member divisions, we have given that evidence appropriate weight.

36 Therefore, where we have recommended single-member divisions, it is because we have judged they provide the best reflection of the statutory criteria in those areas, rather than because of any request or preference that we recommend that pattern. This also applies in those areas where we have decided to recommend multi-member divisions.

37 Councillor Fothergill supported our draft recommendations in full and supported the universal single-councillor pattern, while Councillor Purbrick and two local residents also expressed support for such a pattern. Over Stowey Parish Council opposed it, arguing it would mean there was insufficient capacity for parish issues to be addressed.

38 In their second submission, the Somerset Liberal Democrats also highlighted a number of towns where multi-member divisions might be justified, although they did not submit detailed proposals and were content to proceed broadly along the lines of the draft recommendations. We were not persuaded to adopt any two-councillor divisions on the basis of this submission. However, we have moved away from our draft recommendations and put forward three two-councillor divisions as part of these final recommendations. This is because we received persuasive evidence that demonstrated that such arrangements would better reflect our statutory criteria in those areas. These are discussed in detail later in this report.

## Division boundaries consultation

39 We received 169 submissions in response to our consultation on division boundaries. Among these were four authority-wide proposals – from the Council, the Somerset Council Liberal Democrat Group ('the Liberal Democrats'), a local resident (who proposed 97 councillors, rather than 96) and Kingston St Mary Parish Council ('Kingston St Mary'). An additional council-wide scheme was developed by the Council's Electoral Review Working Group. Though this proposal was rejected by the Council's Constitution and Governance Committee, it was submitted by councillors from the working group and the Somerset Council Conservative Group. The remaining submissions focused on localised comments for division arrangements in specific areas of Somerset.

40 The authority-wide schemes all aimed to provide for as many single-councillor divisions as possible, but all of them, apart from the Kingston St Mary scheme, proposed at least three two-councillor divisions.

41 The Kingston St Mary scheme was based on aligning divisions with Somerset Council's Local Community Network (LCN) structure, a principle supported by several other submissions during both consultations. However, while we acknowledged that aligning division boundaries with LCNs may help to reflect local community identities and interests, and may contribute to convenient and effective

local government, we are not required to adhere to them when recommending divisions. We therefore crossed LCN boundaries if it provided a better balance of our three statutory criteria.

42 Our draft recommendations drew on elements of the various council-wide schemes; however, we more frequently adopted those submitted by the Liberal Democrats. This is because their proposals generally aligned more closely with evidence we received regarding community identities and locally recognised boundaries. In developing our recommendations, we also considered other local evidence, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some instances, we concluded that the submitted proposals did not achieve an optimal balance between our statutory criteria, and we therefore identified and proposed alternative boundaries in those areas.

43 We conducted a virtual tour of Somerset at this stage of the review in order to examine the various proposals. This exercise helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

44 Our draft recommendations were for 96 single-councillor divisions. We considered that our draft recommendations provided for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

## Draft recommendations consultation

45 We received 210 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included comments from the Council, councillors, political groups, local organisations, parish councils and local residents. The majority of the submissions focused on specific areas.

46 Based on the evidence received, we have been persuaded to make changes to our draft recommendations. We also propose name changes to a number of divisions, based on local feedback.

47 We conducted an in-person tour of Somerset in September 2025 in order to look at the areas where we received strong evidence and feedback. Examining the boundaries on the ground has helped to inform our final recommendations.

48 The Cranborne Chase National Landscape (NL) Partnership Board requested that we ensure any divisions covering this designated area are rural in character and not combined with substantial urban areas, so that representation reflects the landscape-based issues and priorities of the NL. It further asked that boundaries support councillors in discharging their statutory duty under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended by the Levelling Up and

Regeneration Act 2023) to conserve and enhance natural beauty and take account of the NL’s statutory management plan and relevant planning protections. The NL also asked that proposed divisions avoid significant urban–rural splits, facilitate effective engagement with the NL Partnership, and support appropriate resourcing of NL functions.

49 We have considered the issues raised and are content that our final recommendations address these concerns. In this part of Somerset, areas of the NL are included within semi-rural divisions such as Bruton, Evercreech and Frome South. Despite two of these three divisions containing all or part of a market town, we are content that each town retains strong functional links with their surrounding rural hinterland. These divisions reflect local geography and established settlement patterns and avoid combining the NL with substantial urban centres.

50 We have also been mindful of our duty in relation to other designated landscapes within Somerset, including the Quantock Hills National Landscape, the Mendip Hills National Landscape, and Exmoor National Park. In each of these areas, we are satisfied that our recommended divisions provide councillors with a coherent geographic context from which to understand and discharge their statutory responsibilities in respect of protected landscapes.

## Final recommendations

51 Our final recommendations are for three two-councillor divisions and 90 single-councillor divisions. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

52 The tables and maps on pages 11–67 detail our final recommendations for each area of Somerset. They detail how the proposed division arrangements reflect the three statutory<sup>5</sup> criteria of:

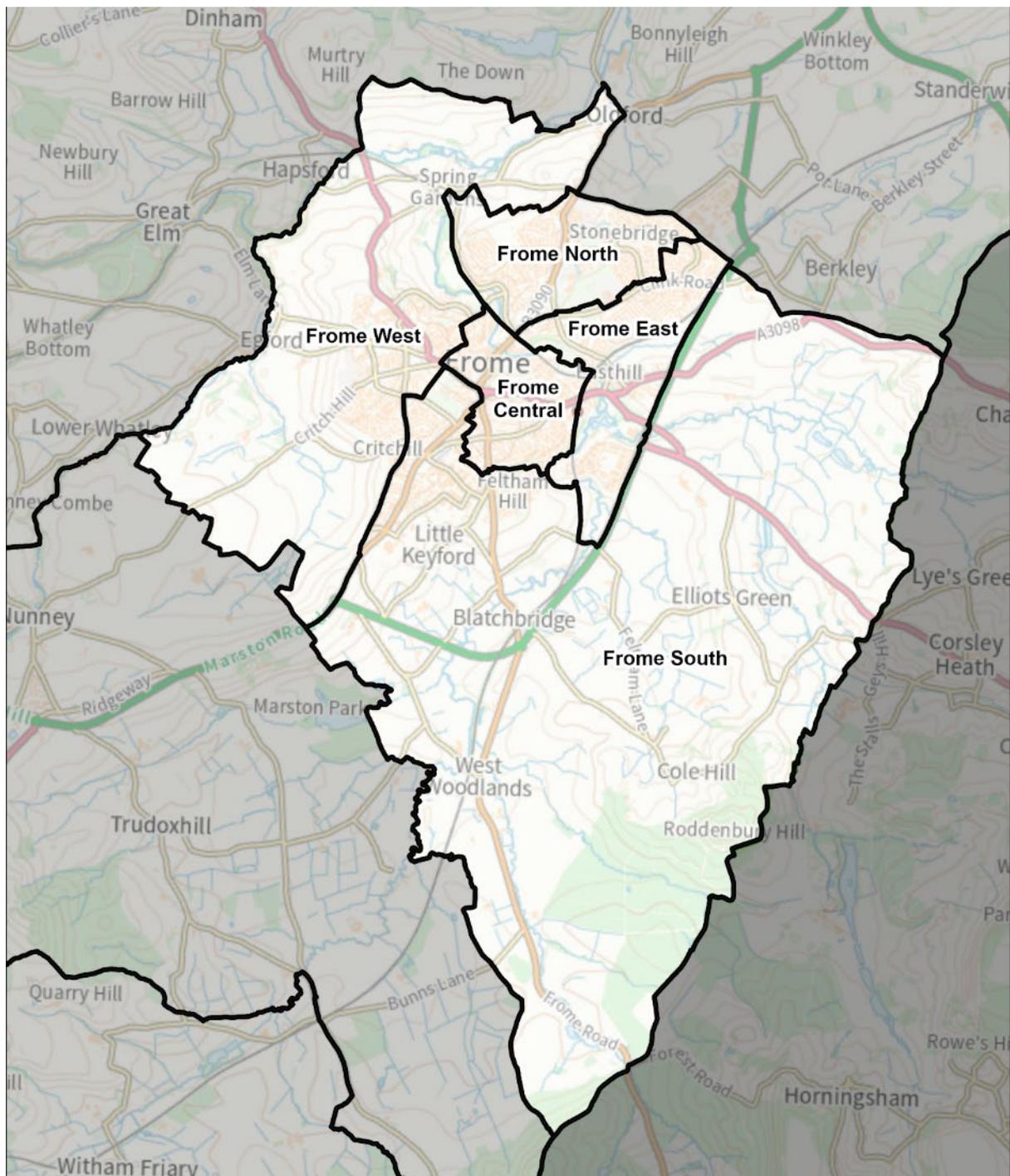
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

53 A summary of our proposed new divisions is set out in the table starting on page 83 and on the large map accompanying this report.

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<sup>5</sup> Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## Frome



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Frome Central	1	8%
Frome East	1	-10%
Frome North	1	-10%
Frome South	1	-7%
Frome West	1	6%

*Frome Central, Frome East, Frome North, Frome South and Frome West*

54 In our draft recommendations, we proposed five divisions for Frome using clearly identifiable boundaries and drawing on natural and man-made features such as the River Frome, railway lines and, where possible, main roads. This approach was intended to produce divisions that are coherent and easily recognisable.

55 We received 13 submissions in response to our draft recommendations for Frome. Frome Town Council broadly supported the proposed boundaries but objected to the use of the river as a boundary, requesting instead that the existing branch railway line be followed. It argued that using the river would divide the town centre. Councillor Kay and three local residents raised similar concerns.

56 Following our visit to Somerset, we agree that using the railway line provides a clearer division boundary and avoids splitting the town centre. We have therefore adopted this amendment in our final recommendations. However, to reflect road access routes, we have retained the river as a boundary for a small area that has road access via Great Western Street.

57 Councillor Kay, the Keyford Area Neighbourhood Group and three local residents opposed the draft division and town council arrangements which affect the Keyford area. They argued that the draft recommendations would divide the Keyford community along the B3092 and that the proposed Keyford town council ward would exclude important parts of the established community, such as the Crown Inn and several streets bearing the Keyford name.

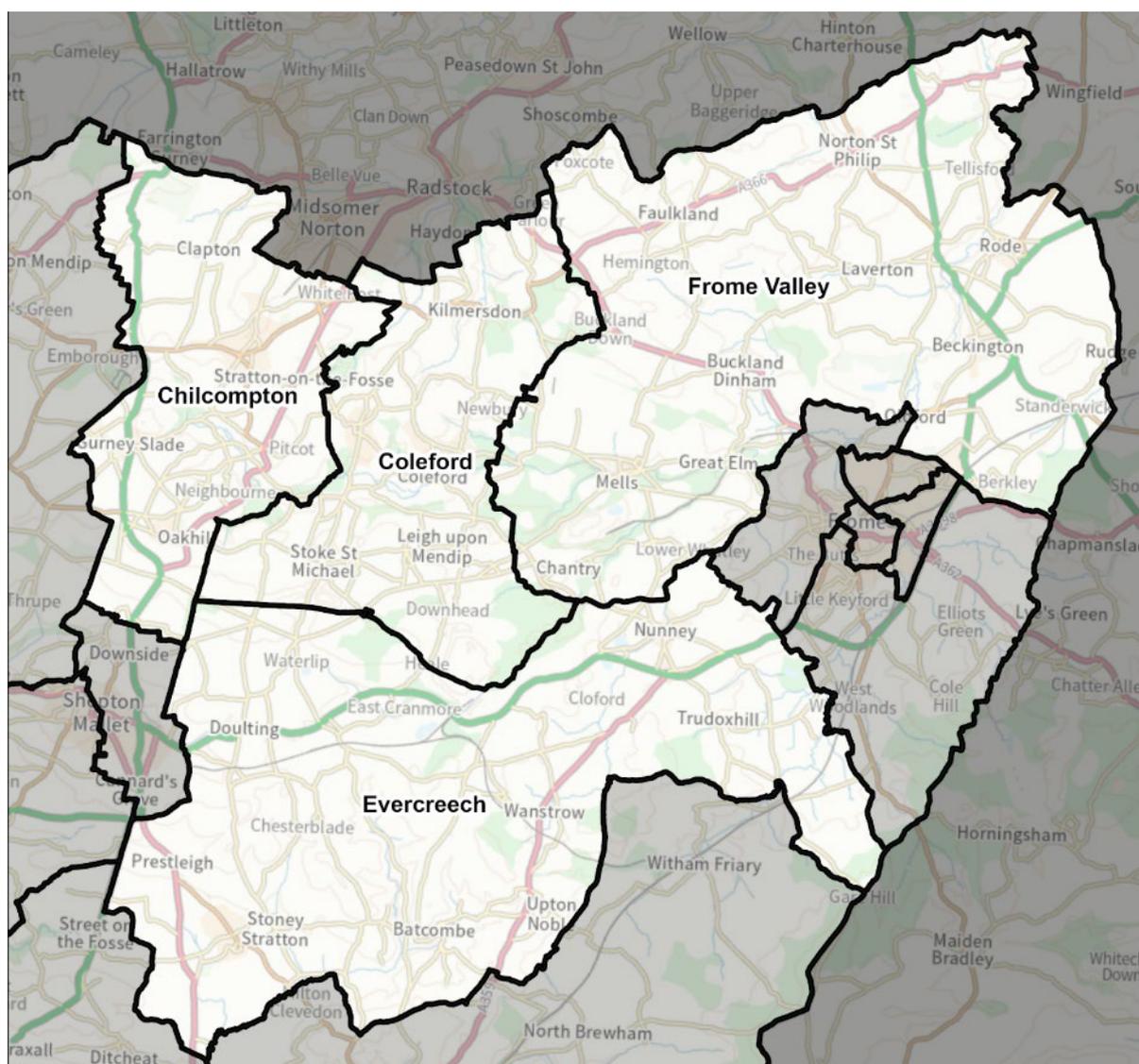
58 Having considered this evidence, we agree that the draft recommendations did not adequately reflect the community identity of the Keyford area. We have therefore amended the boundary between the Frome Central and Frome South divisions to ensure that the Keyford community is included within Frome Central division. Corresponding changes have also been made to the town council arrangements, as set out in the parish electoral arrangements section of this report.

59 Councillor Kay also proposed extending Frome Central division southwards to incorporate Victoria Park, the Avanti Park School, Frome Town Hall and the churches on Park Road, noting that these facilities are widely regarded as central Frome landmarks. They additionally suggested reallocating Locks Hill, in particular its eastern side, to the Frome East division. We have not been persuaded to adopt either proposal as part of our final recommendations. Including the identified landmarks in Frome Central would result in the division being unacceptably large in terms of elector numbers, given our decision to extend its boundaries to include the Keyford community. Similarly, we are not recommending the reallocation of the Locks Hill area, as we remain satisfied that the railway line provides a clearer and more identifiable boundary.

60 We also reviewed Councillor Boyden's previous proposal for three two-councillor divisions for Frome, in light of the corrected position regarding single-councillor divisions. However, we remain satisfied that our pattern of five single-councillor divisions provides the best balance of the statutory criteria. They reflect the local support received during the second consultation, and use clear and identifiable boundaries. Our recommended boundaries also avoid placing rural parishes in divisions containing urban Frome, apart from Selwood parish which, as noted in our draft recommendations, is closely linked to the town.

61 Councillor Kay and a local resident also highlighted the substantial planned growth in Frome South division, with an anticipated increase of around 4,000 electors over the next 15 years. While we acknowledge these concerns, our recommendations are based on electorate forecasts for the five-year period after the end of this review, which is in line with the legislative requirements. On this basis, we are satisfied that Frome South division will achieve acceptable levels of electoral equality within that timeframe.

## North East Somerset



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Chilcompton	1	3%
Coleford	1	0%
Evercreech	1	6%
Frome Valley	1	4%

### *Chilcompton and Coleford*

62 We received no submissions directly relating to these two divisions during consultation. We are therefore confirming them both as part of our final recommendations.

### *Evercreech*

63 One submission was received regarding Evercreech division. Wanstrow Parish Council objected to the proposal to group it in a division with communities to the east

of Shepton Mallet and Evercreech. The Parish Council suggested that it should instead be grouped with the area between Frome and Bruton, while communities near Evercreech should be in a division with the east of Shepton Mallet. It stated that this arrangement would maintain electoral equality while better reflecting local community identities.

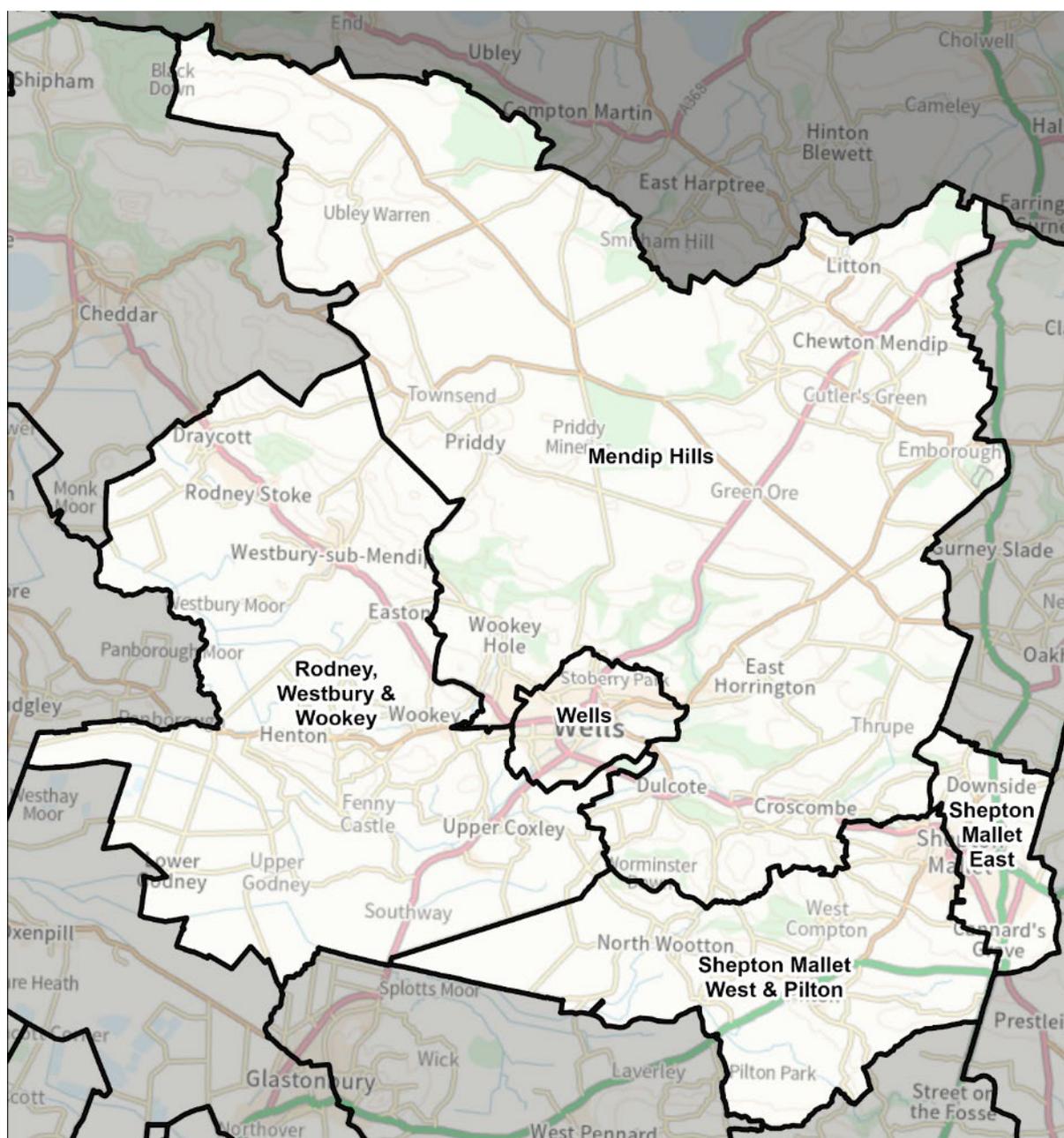
64 We have decided not to adopt this proposal in our final recommendations and confirm our draft Evercreech division as final. This is because incorporating the area between Frome and Bruton (which includes Wanstrow, Trudoxhill and Nunney parishes) into adjacent divisions would have caused those divisions to exceed acceptable levels of electoral equality. Similarly, moving parishes near Evercreech into Shepton Mallet East division would have resulted in that division being significantly oversized in terms of electorate.

#### *Frome Valley*

65 We received submissions concerning our draft recommendations for this area from Berkley Parish Council, Rode Parish Council, Tellisford Parish Meeting and two local residents. All of these respondents opposed our recommended division name of Beckington, Norton & Rode. Alternative names suggested included Hardington Vale, Vale of Hardington, Frome Valley and River Frome Valley.

66 We agree that the name of Beckington, Norton & Rode does not adequately reflect the wider communities covered by the division. Following careful consideration of the alternatives, we have decided to name this division Frome Valley in our final recommendations. We consider that this name, which is drawn from the River Frome, reflects the shared landscape across the division and is clear, concise and recognisable to local electors.

## Shepton Mallet and Wells



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Mendip Hills	1	-5%
Rodney, Westbury & Wookey	1	-7%
Shepton Mallet East	1	-5%
Shepton Mallet West & Pilton	1	9%
Wells	2	-2%

### *Mendip Hills and Rodney, Westbury & Wookey*

67 Our proposed Rodney, Westbury & Wookey division was supported by Rodney Stoke Parish Council and a local resident. Both submissions stated the division was

suitable as it placed similar sized rural parishes with similar aims and issues together. With no further submissions received relating to this division, we have decided to confirm it as final, subject to the transfer of North Wootton parish, as detailed in the next section.

68 In light of the corrected position regarding single-councillor divisions, we re-examined the submission made by St Cuthbert (Out) Parish Council during the first consultation, which requested no changes to the existing Mendip Hills and Mendip West divisions, which are each currently represented by two councillors. However, given the overall reduction in councillor numbers across Somerset, retaining two-councillor divisions in this area would require significant alterations to the surrounding division pattern to ensure electoral equality. We determined that the evidence provided was not sufficiently persuasive to warrant such changes.

#### *Shepton Mallet East and Shepton Mallet West & Pilton*

69 Shepton Mallet Town Council broadly supported the proposed division boundaries, noting that they reflect recent development in the east of Shepton Mallet and generally align with community identities. However, it did request that Ham Lane remain wholly within a Shepton Mallet division and proposed transferring Upper and Lower Westholme to a Wells-based division due to stronger service links. We have considered these proposals but have not adopted them, as both changes would divide the parishes of Croscombe and Pilton, necessitating the creation of relatively small parish wards, which we consider would not support effective and convenient local government.

70 Pilton Parish Council supported its inclusion within Shepton Mallet West & Pilton division. North Wootton Parish Council requested that the parish also be included in Shepton Mallet West & Pilton division, rather than the Rodney, Westbury & Wookey division, as in our draft recommendations. It noted stronger ties with the towns and villages in the Shepton Mallet West & Pilton division. Based on our tour of the area, we agree that this arrangement better reflects local community identity and have therefore adopted this change in our final recommendations.

71 A local resident objected to the division of Shepton Mallet, describing the proposal as overly complicated and expressing concern that the split would isolate residents in the proposed Shepton Mallet East division from key public services in the west. While we acknowledge these concerns, we consider the proposed pattern will not adversely affect community cohesion or effective local governance. We are satisfied that our division arrangements for Shepton Mallet achieves good electoral equality and reflects community identities within the town. We therefore confirm both divisions as final, subject to the inclusion of North Wootton parish in Shepton Mallet West & Pilton division, as outlined above.

## *Wells*

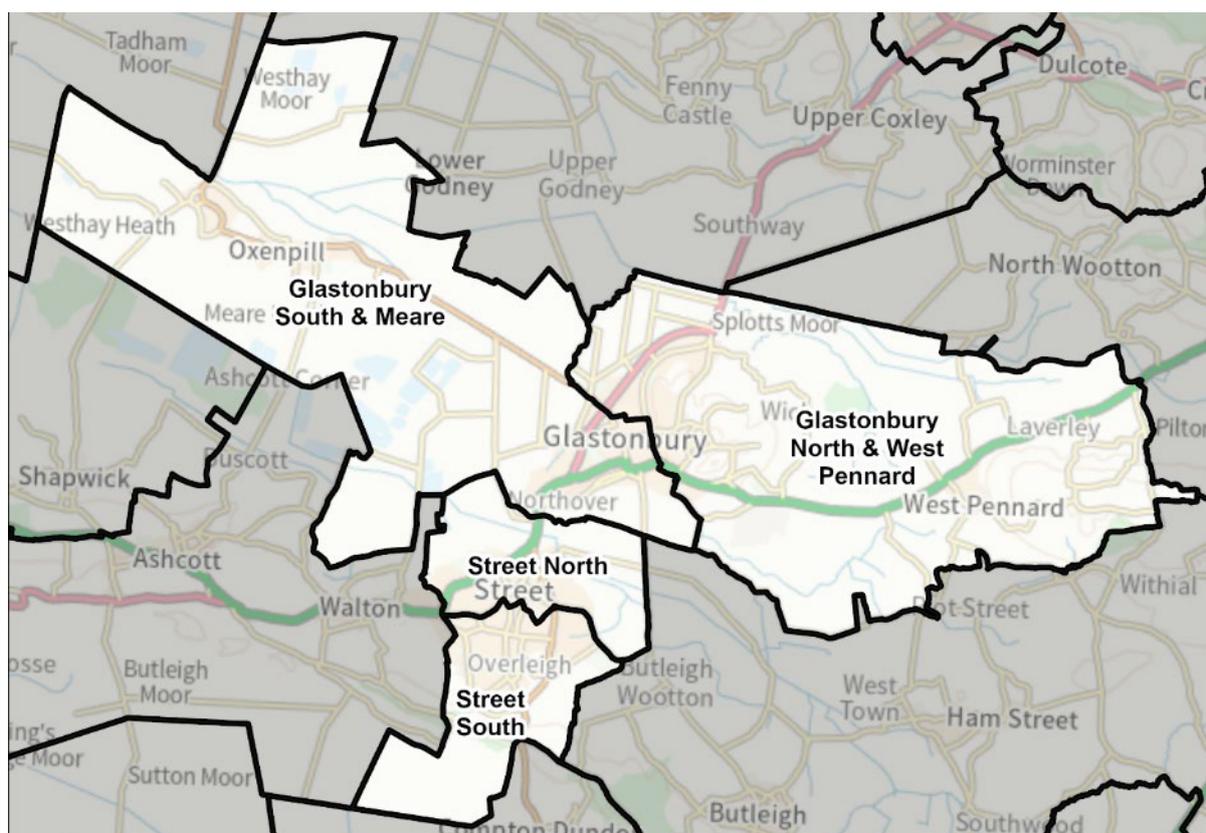
72 Wells City Council and Councillor Butt Philip argued that the city should be represented by a single two-member division. They stated that this arrangement would provide better electoral equality than the two single-member divisions proposed in our draft recommendations, and would offer clearer, more convenient representation through coterminosity with the city boundary. Wells City Council also emphasised that Wells operates as a single, cohesive community, with shared services and institutions, and that dividing it would unnecessarily separate a well-established community that already meets electoral equality requirements. We also noted that, with the exception of the Kingston St Mary proposal, all the authority-wide schemes proposed a two-councillor Wells division that followed the city council boundary during the initial consultation.

73 Wells City Council also submitted an alternative pattern for two single-member divisions should we be minded retaining such an arrangement. This proposal drew on evidence relating to school catchment areas, parish boundaries, historical warding and local transport routes, which Wells City Council considered would produce more coherent and accessible divisions than our draft recommendations. The Somerset Liberal Democrats also provided an alternative single-member pattern in their initial submission. In their second submission, they stated that Wells could form a two-councillor division if we were minded to move away from single-councillor divisions.

74 Having considered the evidence, we have decided to adopt a two-councillor division for the city of Wells as part of our final recommendations. We were particularly persuaded by the submissions from Wells City Council and Councillor Butt Philip that demonstrated that the city functions as a single, cohesive community with shared civic institutions and services, and that a single division would reflect these established community linkages.

75 As Wells is no longer divided between electoral divisions in our final recommendations, we are no longer legally obligated to recommend consequential city council warding arrangements. Should Wells City Council wish to amend its city council warding pattern, as outlined in its submission, this would need to be undertaken through a Community Governance Review conducted by Somerset Council.

## Glastonbury and Street



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Glastonbury North & West Pennard	1	-5%
Glastonbury South & Meare	1	2%
Street North	1	-7%
Street South	1	8%

### *Glastonbury North & West Pennard and Glastonbury South & Meare*

76 Two local residents were content with the proposed divisions for Glastonbury. However, another local resident objected to grouping Meare with Glastonbury, noting their limited use of Glastonbury for services and asserting that the communities have distinct needs. They argued that Meare is more closely aligned with Street or Wells and that combining it with Glastonbury could allow the town to dominate decision-making. Similarly, another resident suggested that Glastonbury should remain a single division rather than being combined with either Meare or West Pennard, describing the communities as distinct. While we acknowledge these concerns, we are not recommending changes to our recommendations. In particular, we note that Glastonbury town does not have sufficient electors to support two single-councillor divisions wholly contained within its town council boundaries and ensure good electoral equality. It is therefore necessary to combine parts of Glastonbury with neighbouring communities. We remain of the view that Meare, Sharpham and West Pennard share reasonable links with parts of Glastonbury, and that our

recommendations therefore provide a balanced reflection of the statutory criteria, allowing for two divisions with good electoral equality and reasonable community connections.

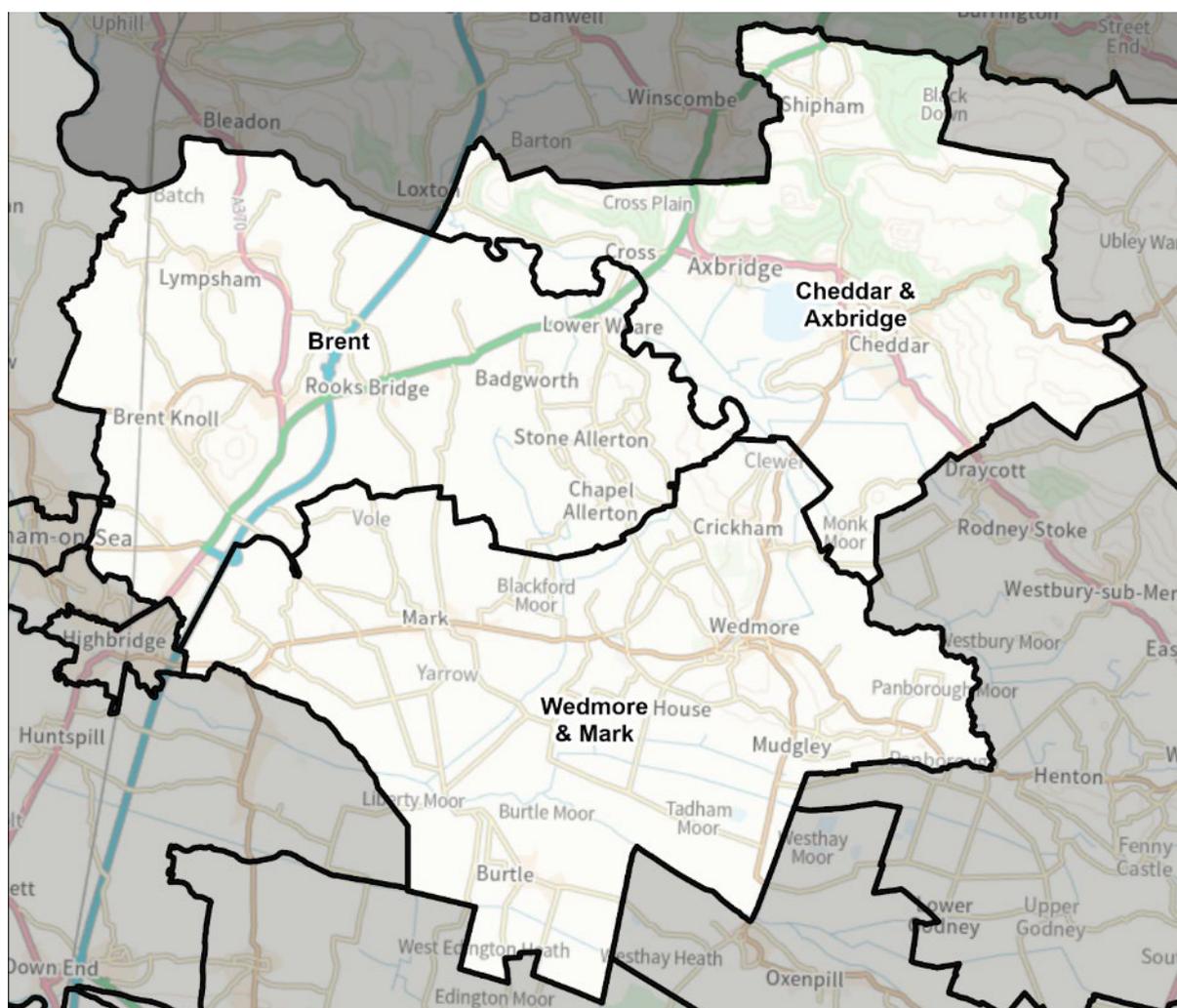
77 Two local residents raised concerns about the proposed Glastonbury divisions, highlighting the town's unique spiritual and historic significance. We have considered these views, but we were not persuaded to change the proposed divisions, which provide for good electoral equality and which reflect community links.

78 Another local resident questioned the naming of the Glastonbury divisions, suggesting that East and West would be more logical. We have considered this point but are not persuaded to change our recommended division names for the town as we consider them to be geographically accurate.

#### *Street North and Street South*

79 During the initial consultation, all authority-wide schemes – except that submitted by Kingston St Mary – proposed a two-councillor Street division aligned with the town council boundary. However, none provided persuasive evidence to show that a two-councillor division would better reflect the statutory criteria, and this remains the case in light of the clarified position on single-councillor divisions. As no further convincing evidence was submitted in support of a two-member division for Street during the consultation on our draft recommendations, we have decided to confirm our two single-councillor divisions for Street as final.

## Cheddar and Axbridge



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Brent	1	-7%
Cheddar & Axbridge	2	-10%
Wedmore & Mark	1	-9%

### *Brent*

80 Support for our proposed Brent division was received from Councillor Filmer, Badgworth Parish Council, Burnham Without Parish Council, Chapel Allerton Parish Council, Lympsham Parish Council and Weare Parish Council. These submissions all agreed with the decision to link similar rural parishes together within a single division. Councillor Filmer also supported the proposed split of Burnham Without parish across divisions as sensible. This placed the urban section in a Burnham-centric division, and the more rural parts in either Brent or Wedmore & Mark division.

81 A local resident supported Chapel Allerton and Weare parishes being placed in the same division, noting close parish links. However, they objected to their inclusion

in the proposed Brent division, arguing this was justified only by electoral equality and not community identity. The respondent preferred an arrangement which would group the parishes of Badgworth, Chapel Allerton, Mark, Weare and Wedmore in the same division arguing that they shared common interests.

82 After consideration, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Brent division as final. We determined that there was insufficient community evidence provided by the local resident to significantly reconfigure our proposed Brent division, particularly given the support we received from Councillor Filmer and its constituent parishes.

83 One submission expressed concern that Edithmead had not been mentioned in the draft proposals. We recommend that the village be placed in our recommended Brent division.

84 Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Town Council requested that the area covered by the Brue and Marine parish wards of Burnham Without Parish Council should be included in the town council area. However, Burnham Without Parish Council strongly opposed any changes to the parish council boundaries. This review relates solely to division boundaries for Somerset Council, and we do not have the authority to alter external parish boundaries. Such changes can only be made by Somerset Council through a Community Governance Review.

#### *Cheddar & Axbridge*

85 Cheddar Parish Council and a local resident objected to our draft proposal to divide Cheddar parish between divisions. Cheddar Parish Council argued that splitting the village would undermine community cohesion, as Cheddar functions as a single, integrated community. Concerns were also raised about dividing Cheddar Gorge between divisions, as this would separate responsibility for the Gorge between two councillors and potentially affect both its protection and economic role. Overall, Cheddar Parish Council considered that our draft recommendations did not reflect community identity or local circumstances. Having reviewed the evidence, we were persuaded by these arguments and have therefore amended our division arrangements to keep Cheddar parish wholly within a single division in our final recommendations.

86 Cheddar Parish Council also suggested that the connection between Cheddar and Axbridge had been overstated in our draft recommendations, emphasising that they are separate communities with distinct identities. However, a single-councillor division comprising only Cheddar parish would be forecast to have an electoral variance of 19%, while a division consisting solely of Axbridge, Compton Bishop and Shipton parishes would have a forecast electoral variance of -40%. Neither of these divisions would provide for acceptable levels of electoral equality. Therefore, to achieve good electoral equality, we consider that a two-councillor division combining

all four parishes offers the most appropriate solution. We therefore recommend a two-councillor Cheddar & Axbridge division in our final recommendations, which is forecast to have an electoral variance of -10% by 2031.

#### *Wedmore & Mark*

87 Mark Parish Council supported the composition of our proposed Wedmore & Mark division, which contains the entirety of Burtle, Mark and Wedmore parishes, and the Watchfield area of Burnham Without parish. With no further submissions received that related to this division, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

# Burnham and Highbridge



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Burnham-on-Sea Central	1	0%
Burnham-on-Sea North, Berrow & Brean	1	6%
Burnham-on-Sea South & Highbridge North	1	4%
Highbridge South	1	9%
Huntspill, Pawlett & Puriton	1	3%

*Burnham-on-Sea Central, Burnham-on-Sea North, Berrow & Brean, Burnham-on-Sea South & Highbridge North and Highbridge South*

88 Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Town Council supported our division proposals for the area covered by its town council.

89 During the first round of consultation, several respondents highlighted the distinct identities of Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea, despite their governance falling under a single parish council. Some proposed that we create separate divisions for each area to better reflect community identity. We did not adopt this approach, as divisions focused on either Highbridge or Burnham-on-Sea would not secure good electoral equality. For the same reason, we are unable to accept the proposal submitted by the Bridgwater Constituency Labour Party to unite Highbridge North and Highbridge South in a division, while also incorporating Burnham Marine and the new housing estates south of Alstone. The Bridgwater Constituency Labour Party, in addition to a local resident, opposed our draft recommendations on the grounds that they split Highbridge across two divisions and blurred the distinction between Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea.

90 We recognise the wish to consolidate the built-up area of Highbridge within a single division. However, as explained in our draft recommendations, we cannot do so without creating unacceptable electoral variances and having significant consequential effects upon neighbouring divisions. We therefore do not recommend any changes to the boundaries between our divisions in Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge as part of our final recommendations. We are content that our final recommendations represent an effective balance between the statutory criteria.

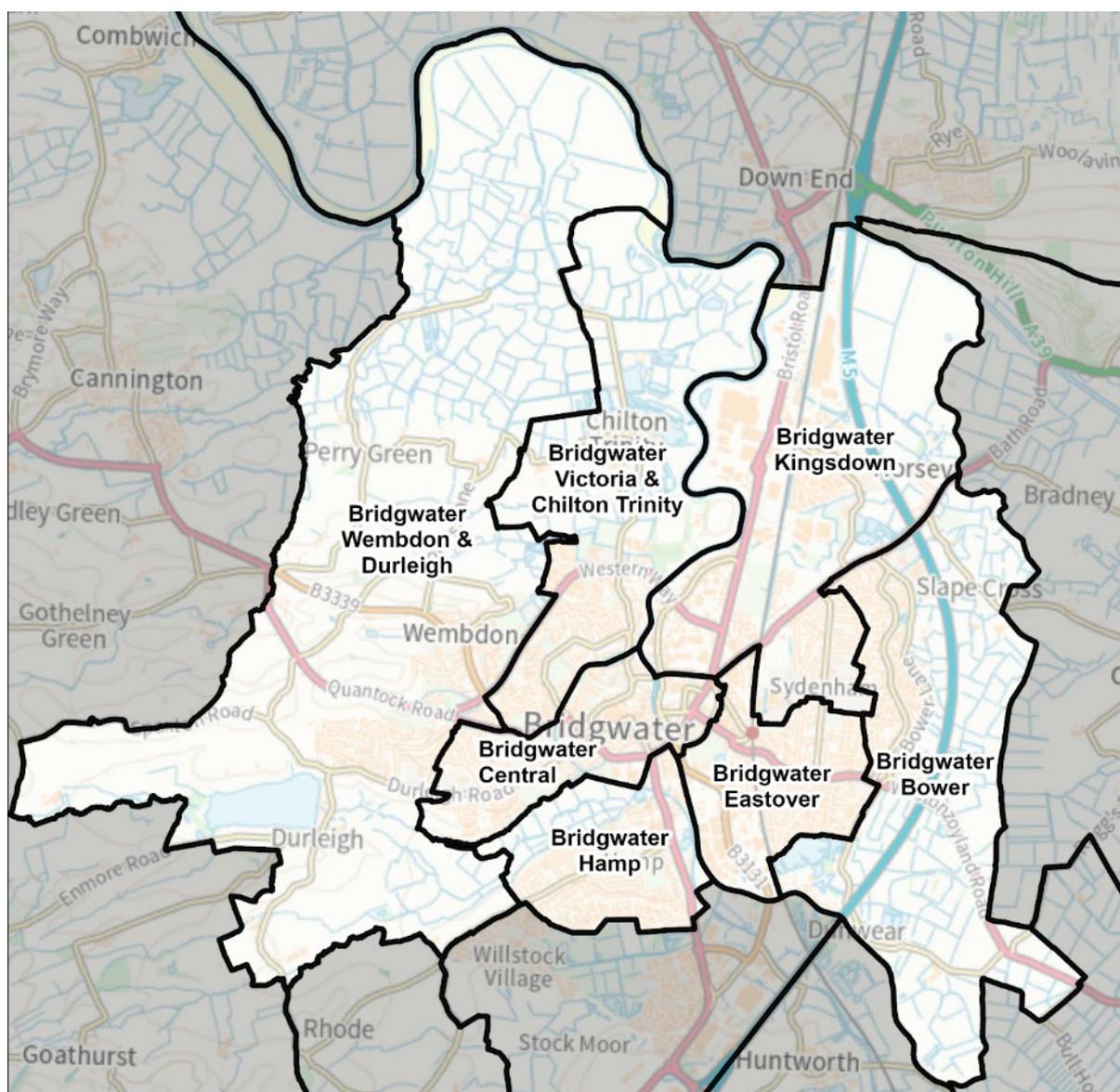
91 Councillor Filmer supported linking Berrow and Brean in a division with the northern part of Burnham-on-Sea. Conversely, a local resident objected to the boundary between Burnham Central and Burnham North, Berrow & Brean divisions, suggesting it should instead follow the ecclesiastical parish boundary of Berrow and Burnham-on-Sea. We are not adopting this proposal as it would result in an oversized Burnham Central division and a considerably undersized Burnham North, Berrow & Brean division, in terms of electorate.

92 In our draft recommendations, we asked for views on whether the suffix ‘-on-Sea’ should be appended to Burnham in the division names. Two local residents requested that it be added to acknowledge the full name of the town. We have therefore amended the names of divisions and town council wards covering Burnham-on-Sea, as we consider this better reflects the recognised name of the community.

*Huntspill, Pawlett & Puriton*

93 We received no submissions directly relating to this division during consultation. We therefore confirm it as part of our final recommendations.

## Bridgwater



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Bridgwater Bower	1	-3%
Bridgwater Central	1	8%
Bridgwater Eastover	1	9%
Bridgwater Hamp	1	4%
Bridgwater Kingsdown	1	9%
Bridgwater Victoria & Chilton Trinity	1	10%
Bridgwater Wembdon & Durleigh	1	5%

94 Bridgwater Town Council and the Bridgwater Constituency Labour Party requested that we recommend a pattern of multi-member divisions across the town, expressing a preference for this approach over single-councillor divisions. However,

we were not persuaded to adopt such a proposal, as we were not persuaded that sufficient community-based evidence had been provided to demonstrate why such an arrangement would provide a more effective balance of the statutory criteria than our single-member division pattern.

95 Bridgwater Town Council, the Bridgwater Constituency Labour Party and Councillor Redman all advocated expanding the boundaries of Bridgwater Town Council to reflect new and ongoing development across the town. While we note these observations, we are unable to adjust parish or town council boundaries as part of an electoral review. This can only be done by a Community Governance Review carried out by Somerset Council.

#### *Bridgwater Bower and Bridgwater Kingsdown*

96 We received two submissions relating to these divisions, from Bridgwater Without Parish Council and a local resident. Both objected to the proposed inclusion of parts of the parish in either division. They argued that this would split the parish, sever established community links and reduce effective local representation, with the Parish Council noting strong connections across its parish area through schools and community groups. While we acknowledge this evidence, we are not persuaded to amend the draft recommendations. These two divisions achieve good electoral equality and we are of the view that they will reflect the pattern of new residential development across Bridgwater and Bridgwater Without parishes.

97 Councillor Redman proposed that Bridgwater Kingsdown division be renamed Bridgwater Kingsdown–Castlefields & Sydenham North, while the Bridgwater Constituency Labour Party suggested the name Bridgwater Castlefields. We have decided not to adopt either proposal. We consider the name Kingsdown to be more appropriate, given that the Kingsdown area encompasses a substantial portion of the division's electorate. We have therefore confirmed our draft recommendations for these two divisions as final.

#### *Bridgwater Central*

98 The Somerset Liberal Democrats requested that Bridgwater Westover division be renamed Bridgwater Central, on the basis that the division extends across both sides of the River Parrett. We have adopted this name change as we consider Bridgwater Central to be a more accurate reflection of the geography of the division, noting that it contains the core of the town centre.

#### *Bridgwater Eastover*

99 Councillor Redman suggested the Bridgwater Eastover division be renamed Bridgwater Eastover & South Sydenham. We decided not to adopt this name change as we consider our proposed name to describe the geographic extent of the division appropriately. We therefore confirm this division as final.

### *Bridgwater Hamp*

100 We received no submissions regarding the boundaries of our proposed Bridgwater Hamp division so we confirm our draft recommendations as final. However, we did receive two submissions relating to the consequential town council arrangements within the division, which are discussed in the parish electoral arrangements section of this report.

### *Bridgwater Victoria & Chilton Trinity*

101 We received a submission from Chilton Trinity Parish Council objecting to the proposed inclusion of their parish in a Bridgwater-based division. It argued that Chilton Trinity is a rural settlement with stronger community links to Wembdon and Cannington parishes and expressed concern about being combined with a large urban area. While we acknowledge these local connections, moving the parish into a division with Wembdon and Cannington would result in significant electoral inequality. However, we have adopted the council's suggestion to rename the division Bridgwater Victoria & Chilton Trinity. The inclusion of Chilton Trinity in the division name was also proposed by Councillor Redman. We agree with the Parish Council that this will help avoid confusion with the nearby parish of Chilton Polden but will also recognise Chilton Trinity as a distinct community within the division.

102 Councillor Redman also suggested replacing Victoria with New Town in the division's name. We have not adopted this proposal as we consider Victoria to be appropriate given the presence of the park and community centre that have this name. We also note that Victoria has been used for previous ward names in this area suggesting it has established local recognition. We therefore confirm the draft arrangements as final, subject to the revised division name.

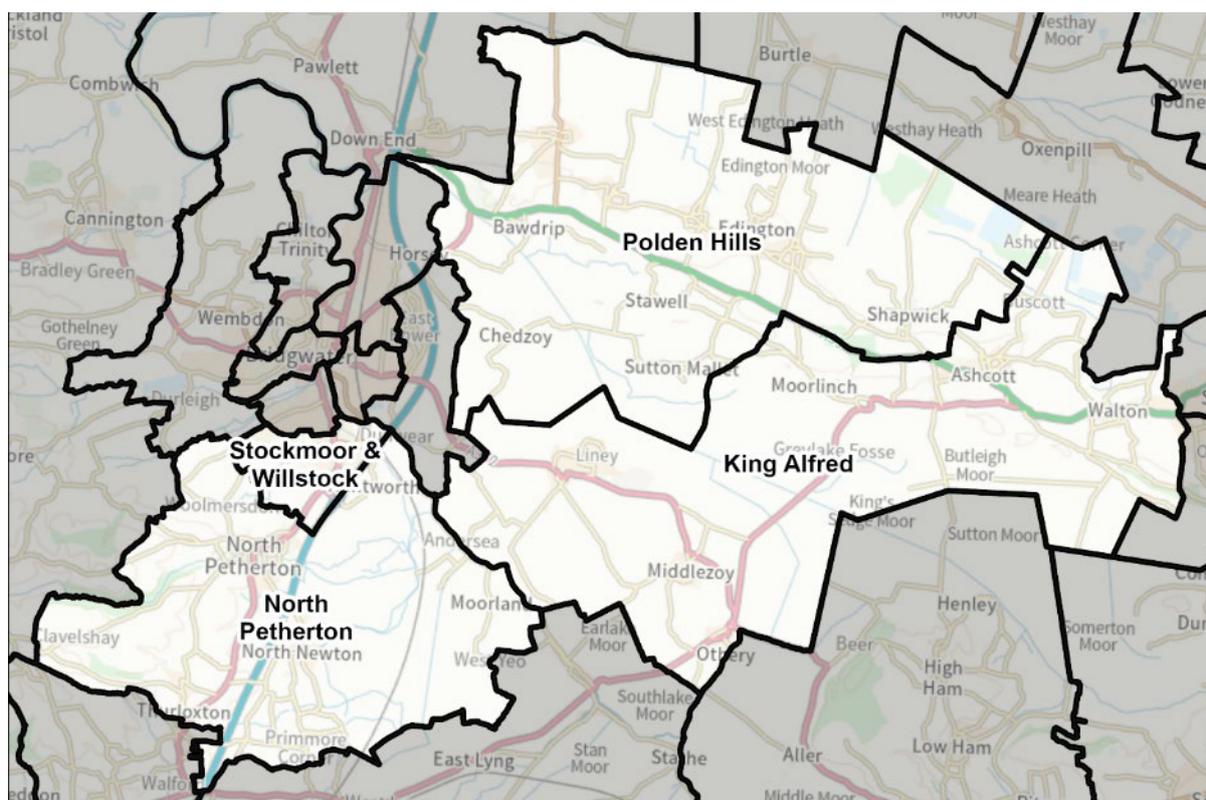
### *Bridgwater Wembdon & Durleigh*

103 Councillor Slocombe opposed our Bridgwater Wembdon & Durleigh division on the basis that it would divide long-established communities. They stated that the residential area between Danesboro and Northfield has historically formed part of the Wyndham community and retains strong community identity, including shared use of local schools and family networks. They argued that splitting this area between two divisions would undermine these connections and lead to inconsistent representation. Councillor Slocombe further stated that there is no natural community link between Wembdon and Durleigh, noting that Wembdon has traditionally looked towards Cannington. They also suggested that Brymore Close and Bouverie Road be included in Westover division instead, to reflect their stronger links to that area.

104 We acknowledge the concerns raised about the historical cohesion of communities in the Wyndham area and the desire to return to previous council arrangements. However, restoring the previous Wyndham ward that existed in the former Sedgemoor District Council would result in unacceptable levels of electoral

inequality and would not provide a workable division pattern across Bridgwater. We are therefore not proposing to move away from our draft recommendations for this area. We also considered the request to amend the boundary around Brymore Close and Bouverie Road. However, their inclusion in Bridgwater Central division would result in the division having notable electoral inequality. We have therefore not adopted this proposal and confirm our draft recommendations for Bridgwater Wembdon & Durleigh as final.

## Polden Hills and North Petherton



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
King Alfred	1	6%
North Petherton	1	-6%
Polden Hills	1	10%
Stockmoor & Willstock	1	-1%

### *King Alfred*

105 A local resident commented on the composition of the proposed King Alfred division. They suggested that Westonzoyland parish should be included in a division with Bridgwater town, Ashcott parish in a Polden Hills division and Walton parish in a division with Street. However, we were not persuaded that these alternatives would offer a stronger reflection of community identity or ensure acceptable electoral equality. We have therefore decided to confirm our recommendations for King Alfred division as final.

### *North Petherton and Stockmoor & Willstock*

106 We received a submission from North Petherton Town Council. It broadly welcomed our draft recommendations. While it had favoured retaining a two-councillor division, it supported the creation of two divisions covering the parish as proposed. It did, however, suggest that the Stockmoor & Willstock division be renamed North Petherton Willstock & Stockmoor to reflect its location within North

Petherton parish. We are not adopting this naming proposal, as we consider our recommended division names to be clearer and more succinct.

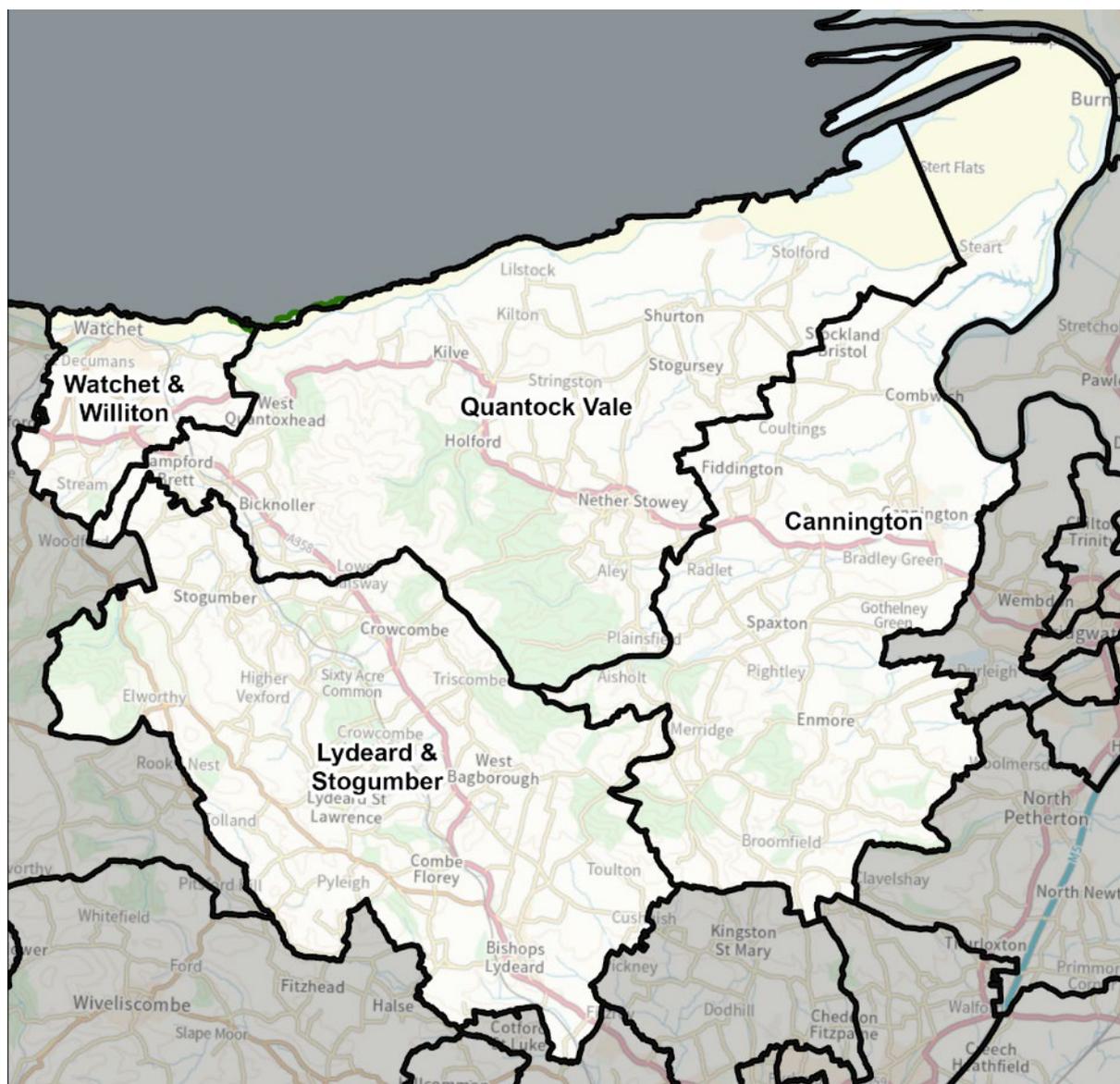
107 The Town Council also supported our proposal to include the Hamp Bridge parish ward, which comprises a small number of properties on the parish's northern boundary, within Bridgwater Hamp division, noting that residents in this area look towards Bridgwater.

108 A local resident objected to Willstock and Stockmoor forming a standalone division, arguing that it would create unnecessary additional councillor posts and further segregate the area from Hamp. They suggested instead dividing Willstock and Stockmoor between Bridgwater Hamp and North Petherton divisions. We are not adopting this proposal, as we remain satisfied that our proposed Stockmoor & Willstock division provides a good reflection of the statutory criteria and offers effective representation for these newer, distinct communities. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for North Petherton and Stockmoor & Willstock divisions as final.

#### *Polden Hills*

109 Both Bawdrip Parish Council and Woolavington Parish Council supported our proposed Polden Hills division. With no further submissions received, we confirm this division as part of our final recommendations.

## Quantocks



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Cannington	1	-9%
Lydeard & Stogumber	1	0%
Quantock Vale	1	-8%
Watchet & Williton	1	11%

### *Cannington and Quantock Vale*

111 Councillor Roberts, of Nether Stowey Parish Council, objected to the proposed Cannington and Quantock Vale divisions on the basis that we had placed Fiddington parish in the Cannington division, thereby separating it from Nether Stowey and Over Stowey parishes. They argued that these communities share schools, shops, medical services and highlighted the longstanding cooperation between these

parishes. We have carefully considered these views but have decided not to adopt this proposal as moving Fiddington parish from Cannington division would result in the division being undersized, with a forecast electoral variance of -13%. We were not persuaded sufficient community evidence had been provided to justify this electoral variance. We therefore confirm the proposed arrangements for Cannington and Quantock Vale divisions as final, subject to the latter division's boundary amendment with Watchet & Williton division.

112 Otterhampton Parish Council requested a change to their parish boundary. However, we do not have the authority to amend parish boundaries. This responsibility lies with Somerset Council, which can consider such changes through a Community Governance Review.

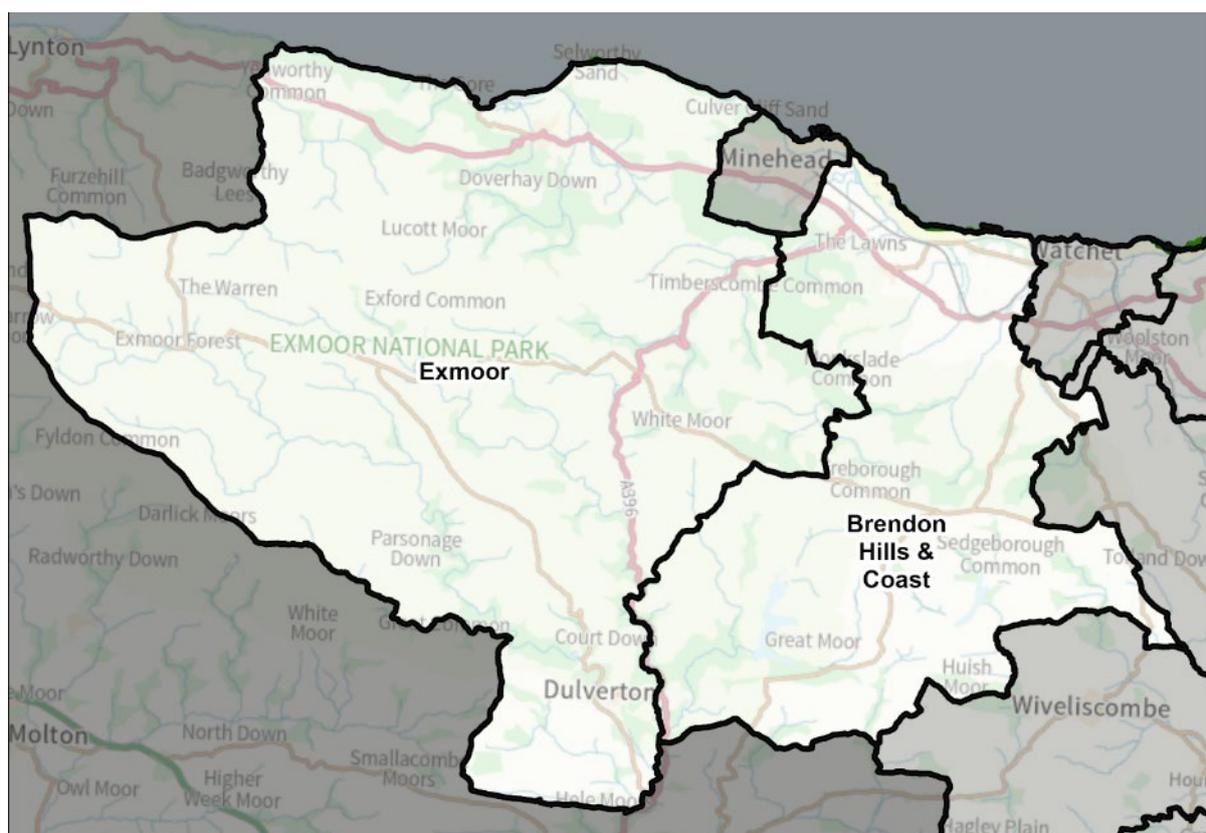
#### *Lydeard & Stogumber*

113 We received no submissions relating to this division during consultation. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final.

#### *Watchet & Williton*

114 In relation to this division, Williton Parish Council objected to the proposed boundary with Quantock Vale division, which followed the West Somerset Railway line and split the parish. It argued that the entire parish should remain within a single division to avoid confusion over councillor responsibilities and to ensure effective representation. We have considered these views and, despite the forecast electoral variance being slightly above 10%, we have adopted the proposal to keep Williton parish wholly within a single division. We were persuaded that this variance was justified to ensure effective local governance and reflect community interests in Williton parish.

## Exmoor



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Brendon Hills & Coast	1	-7%
Exmoor	1	13%

### *Exmoor and Brendon Hills & Coast*

115 The Somerset Liberal Democrats, supported by a local resident, proposed a significantly different division pattern for this area based on a north–south split, suggesting separate coastal and upland divisions to better reflect community interests. After careful consideration, we have decided not to adopt this proposal. We are satisfied that our recommended east–west division pattern provides an appropriate balance between reflecting community identities and maintaining electoral equality. In particular, we were not persuaded that sufficient evidence had been presented to justify major changes to our draft recommendations, nor that a north–south arrangement would offer materially better representation of local communities than the proposed east–west configuration.

116 Brushford, Cutcombe and Withypool & Hawkrigde Parish Councils supported their inclusion in our Exmoor West division. A local resident also supported the proposed Exmoor West division.

117 Luxborough Parish Council also supported remaining in a division with the western Exmoor parishes. The Council emphasised both historical and recent ties with neighbouring parishes such as Cutcombe, Dulverton and Winsford, which have enabled effective collaboration on shared issues and challenges. It strongly opposed any change that would sever these connections, highlighting their importance for reflecting local community identity.

118 Wootton Courtenay and Timberscombe Parish Councils objected to their exclusion from an Exmoor West division. Both parishes stressed longstanding links with each other and other western Exmoor parishes through schools, services, conservation, tourism and rural infrastructure. They argued that the draft recommendations placed them with Brendon Hills parishes with which they have no functional or community ties, and requested that they be placed in our Exmoor West division.

119 We carefully considered these submissions. While including all these parishes in Exmoor West division would result in a relatively high forecast electoral variance of 13%, we consider this variance acceptable. This is because we were persuaded by the strength of the evidence received that this adjustment would better reflect community identities and interests, and ensure effective local governance.

120 Carhampton Parish Council objected to the proposed division name Exmoor East & The Brendon Hills, arguing that the term 'Exmoor East' was geographically inaccurate. It stated Exmoor proper lies west of the A396, while the majority of parishes in the proposed division are traditionally Brendon Hill parishes. It stated that several parishes fall outside the Exmoor National Park and identify primarily with the Brendon Hills rather than Exmoor. The Council cited historical and contemporary sources, including Ordnance Survey maps, local settlement terminology, and the former Brendon Hills Mineral Line. Coastal parishes such as Carhampton, Old Cleeve and Washford were noted as coastal communities linked to the Brendon Hills rather than Exmoor.

121 Carhampton Parish Council suggested that the two proposed divisions of Exmoor East & The Brendon Hills and Exmoor West be renamed Brendon Hills & Coast and Exmoor, respectively, to provide clearer and more accurate identities. These proposed names were also suggested by a local resident.

122 Councillor Moran, of Clatworthy Parish Council, stated other parish councillors and residents within the parish supported this view, arguing that East Exmoor & The Brendon Hills was misleading and recommended the simpler name Brendon Hills, opposing references to the 'Coast' as too vague. In contrast, Brompton Regis Parish Council supported retaining the name Exmoor East & The Brendon Hills, emphasising the importance of the Exmoor Local Community Network (LCN) for

maintaining communication and collaboration across Exmoor and Brendon Hills parishes.

123 We acknowledge that there are differing views as to what the divisions in this area should be named. We therefore carefully considered these representations and have adopted Carhampton Parish Council's suggested names for the two divisions. We determined that these names most accurately reflect the geography, historical identity and community affiliations of the parishes in both divisions. Brendon Hills & Coast recognises both the upland Brendon Hills and the coastal communities, while the name Exmoor is appropriate for the division given it comprises parishes (with the exception of Brushford and part of Dulverton) entirely within Exmoor National Park.

124 Brompton Regis Parish Council welcomed our attention to its earlier comments in our draft recommendations but expressed concern that our renamed Brendon Hills & Coast division may underrepresent sparsely populated hill parishes, as larger coastal populations could dominate decision-making. We acknowledge these concerns but consider Brompton Regis has good links with the neighbouring Brendon Hills parishes, and that its community identity and interests can be effectively represented within the Brendon Hills & Coast division.

125 Skilgate Parish Meeting requested inclusion in the Exmoor West division, citing stronger functional links to Dulverton and its partial location within Exmoor National Park. However, we do not propose to transfer Skilgate parish, as we consider it shares good community links with the adjacent Brendon Hills parishes. We also note that two local residents supported its inclusion in the renamed Brendon Hills & Coast division.

126 Brompton Ralph Parish Council supported its inclusion in the renamed Brendon Hills & Coast division, considering it appropriate given its rural character and strong community links with the Brendon Hills parishes.

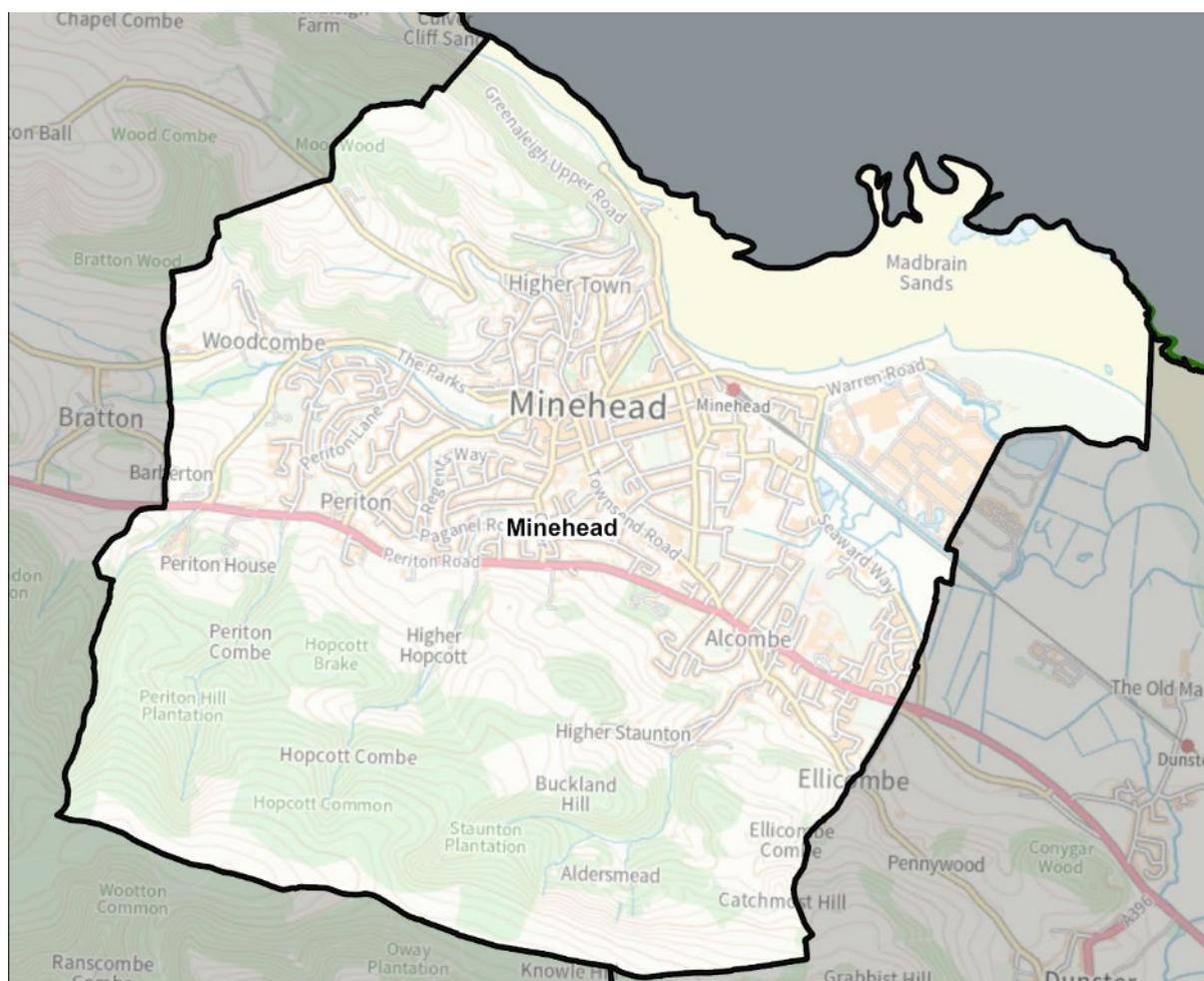
127 Monksilver Parish Council objected to its inclusion in a Brendon Hills division, citing concerns over a single councillor covering a large, multi-parish area and potential cross-boundary issues. While we note these concerns, our final Brendon Hills & Coast division provides good electoral equality, with councillors representing a similar number of electors as elsewhere in Somerset. We have not been persuaded that the geographic size of the division will hinder effective and convenient local government for the area.

128 A local resident suggested adjusting divisions to align more closely with the Exmoor National Park boundary, given the relationship between Somerset Council and the National Park Authority. We do not consider such adjustments warranted, as we determined it would not materially improve community representation and would result in significant electoral inequality. Furthermore, as mentioned in paragraph 50,

we are satisfied that our recommended division pattern in Exmoor provides councillors with a coherent geographic context from which to understand and discharge their statutory responsibilities in respect of protected landscapes.

129 We therefore recommend the renamed divisions of Brendon Hills & Coast and Exmoor as part of our final recommendations. When compared to our draft recommendations, the only boundary change relates to the transfer of Timberscombe and Wootton Courtenay parishes from the former division to the latter. We are satisfied that the final division pattern for the rural west of the authority appropriately balances the statutory criteria of reflecting community identities, providing for effective and convenient local governance and securing acceptable levels of electoral equality.

## Minehead



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Minehead	2	-4%

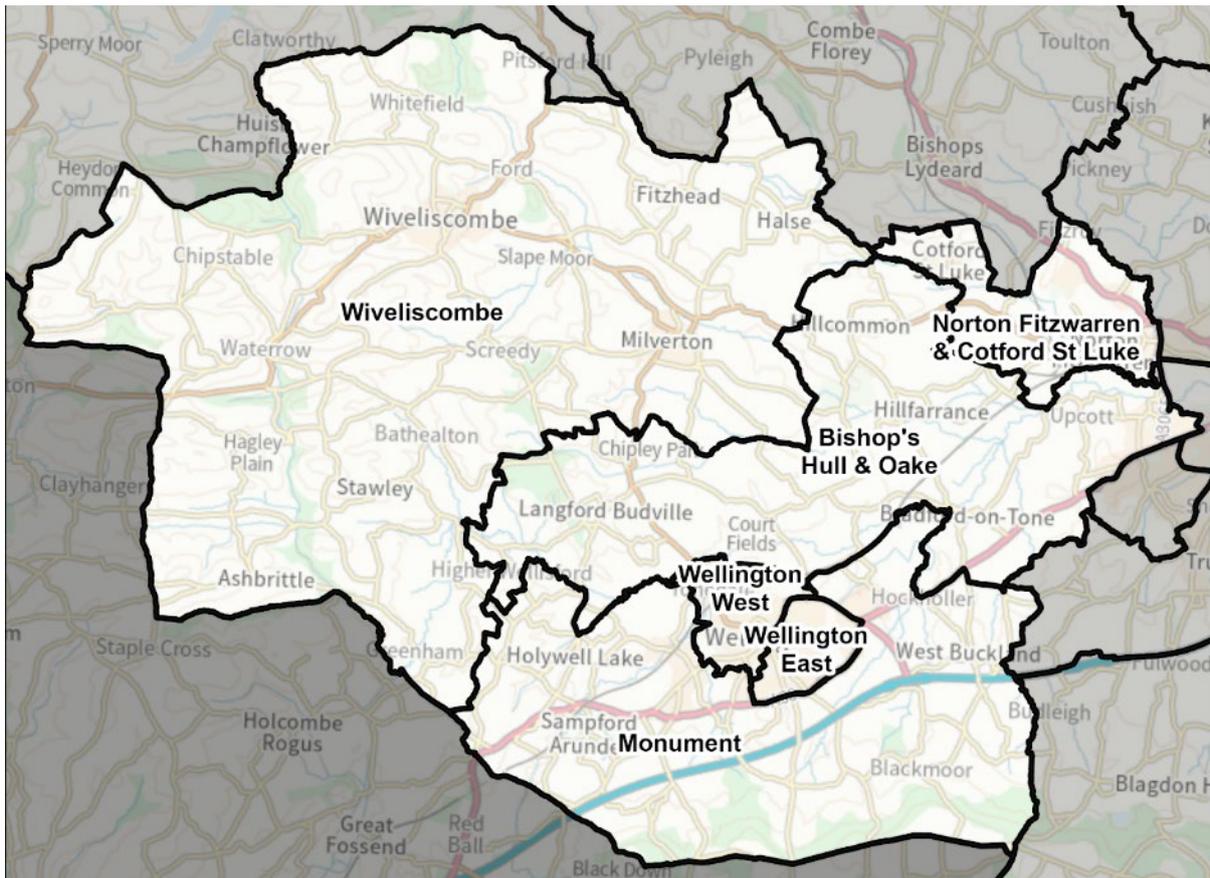
### *Minehead*

130 We received submissions from Minehead Town Council, Councillor Palmer, Councillor Chilcott and Councillor Hadley, all of whom opposed our draft recommendations to create two single-councillor divisions for the Minehead area. Instead, they proposed a single two-councillor division coterminous with the town council boundary. They argued that dividing the town would create unnecessary complexity for residents, whereas a unified two-member division would provide greater clarity and coherence. It was further contended that the proposed boundary between the two divisions followed roads that do not form meaningful or recognisable dividing lines, and stressed that Minehead functions as a single, cohesive community with shared schools, health facilities, transport networks, retail areas and leisure amenities.

131 In light of this evidence, we found the case for a two-councillor division for Minehead to be persuasive. We have therefore decided to depart from our draft recommendations and combine the proposed single-councillor Minehead East and Minehead West divisions into a two-councillor Minehead division in our final recommendations. We consider this arrangement will provide the most effective balance of the statutory criteria.

132 Councillor Palmer also requested that changes be made to the Minehead parish boundary, with the division boundary amended accordingly. As noted in our draft recommendations, responsibility for altering parish boundaries rests with Somerset Council. Should the Council undertake a Community Governance Review and subsequently amend the parish boundary, it may then request that we consider consequential changes to the division boundaries to reflect the changed parish boundary.

## Wiveliscombe and Wellington



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Bishop's Hull & Oake	1	-2%
Monument	1	-1%
Norton Fitzwarren & Cotford St Luke	1	2%
Wellington East	1	3%
Wellington West	1	8%
Wiveliscombe	1	7%

### *Bishop's Hull & Oake*

134 Oake Parish Council objected to its inclusion in a division with Bishop's Hull, West Buckland, Nynehead and Bradford-on-Tone parishes. It argued that Oake was a rural community with longstanding ties to Milverton and Wiveliscombe, and that these links were stronger than those it shared with the more urban Bishop's Hull or Wellington-facing West Buckland. It further noted that Oake and Bishop's Hull sat within different Local Community Network (LCN) areas, expressing concern that combining them would disrupt existing collaboration structures and place additional demands on councillors.

135 We carefully considered this evidence but were not persuaded to adopt this proposal. Placing Oake in a division centred on Milverton and Wiveliscombe would have led to unacceptable electoral inequality, producing forecast variances of -15% in a Bishop's Hull & Oake division and +19% in a Wiveliscombe division. While we acknowledged Oake's rural identity and links to neighbouring western parishes, electoral variances of this level would not have been consistent with our duty to secure good electoral equality across Somerset.

136 However, we have decided to transfer West Buckland parish from this division, in light of clear evidence of its stronger connections with Wellington. As this change would leave Bishop's Hull & Oake with too few electors, we have instead transferred Langford Budville parish to this division from Rockwell Green. Langford Budville had previously been grouped with Bradford-on-Tone, Oake and Nynhead under the former district council electoral arrangements and we note the evidence from Councillor Booth that Langford Budville is distinct from Wellington. We are satisfied that this modification will both secure electoral equality by 2031 and reflect local identities and connections.

137 A local resident argued that Bishop's Hull parish should be included within a Taunton-based division, noting its close proximity to the town centre and the benefits this brings to its residents. They considered our draft recommendations unsuitable and felt they did not reflect the town's built-up area. While we have carefully considered these points, we are not persuaded that Bishop's Hull should be included in a Taunton-based division. The parish has a distinct identity, operating as a separate local council, and including it in a Taunton division would require significant changes to the division pattern for the wider area which we are not persuaded we have the evidence to justify.

#### *Monument, Wellington East and Wellington West*

138 Wellington Town Council generally welcomed the proposals for Wellington East and Wellington West divisions but opposed the separation of Tonedale and Rockwell Green from those divisions, favouring boundaries that aligned with those of the town council. Councillor Lithgow raised specific concern regarding Rockwell Green, while two residents stated that Tonedale formed an integral part of Wellington. However, as set out in our draft recommendations, good electoral equality cannot be achieved without combining parts of the town in divisions with neighbouring rural parishes.

139 During our visit to Wellington, we observed particularly strong functional links between Tonedale and Wellington town centre. We have therefore decided to transfer Tonedale to Wellington West division from our draft Rockwell Green division. However, to offset the resultant reduction in the electorate of Rockwell Green, we have adopted the alternative proposal put forward by the Taunton & Wellington Labour Party to include the area west of Swains Lane (south of Exeter Road and north of the A38 bypass) in this division. We noted during our visit to Somerset that

this area shares closer proximity and affinity with Rockwell Green and the surrounding rural settlements than does Tonedale.

140 We have decided not to include Rockwell Green in either Wellington East or Wellington West divisions, as doing so would result in unacceptable levels of electoral inequality across the three Wellington-based divisions. While we acknowledge that Rockwell Green forms part of Wellington parish and is reliant on Wellington town for key services, we maintain the view that it is somewhat distinct from the town centre, being separated by a small area of green space and possessing its own church, primary school, shops and community hall. We therefore regard Rockwell Green as the part of Wellington parish best suited to form part of a separate division in order to secure good electoral equality across the wider area.

141 We received evidence from a local resident, the Somerset Liberal Democrats, Councillor Lithgow and Oake Parish Council highlighting strong links between West Buckland parish and the wider Wellington area. The local resident, supported by the Somerset Liberal Democrats, suggested we split the parish south of the A38 to enable this connection while maintaining electoral equality in Bishop's Hull & Oake division. While we agreed that West Buckland should be placed in a division with the parishes that surround the Wellington area, we did not consider it appropriate to divide the parish between divisions. In particular, we determined that doing so would not provide for effective and convenient local government given its relatively small size in terms of electorate.

142 Instead, we have decided to transfer the whole of West Buckland parish into Rockwell Green division, which we also rename Monument, as proposed by Councillor Booth. This places West Buckland parish in a division with similar rural parishes with strong ties to Wellington. We considered Monument to be a more inclusive and locally recognisable name than Rockwell Green, as the Wellington Monument is a widely known landmark that serves as a unifying symbol for communities across the area covered by the division. The name has also been used historically for wards with similar boundaries, indicating that it already carries a measure of local recognition.

143 As outlined earlier in this report, as part of our final recommendations we have also transferred Langford Budville parish from our renamed Monument division into Bishop's Hull & Oake, to secure electoral equality across divisions.

144 Councillor Lloyd of Sampford Arundel Parish Council requested that the parish be moved from Rockwell Green division into a Wiveliscombe-based division, citing educational links with Stawley parish and a shared rural character. However, transferring Sampford Arundel would also necessitate moving Wellington Without parish, which surrounds it. Including both parishes in our Wiveliscombe division would create high electoral variances that we do not consider are justified by the

evidence received. We have therefore not been persuaded to adopt this specific proposal as part of our final recommendations.

#### *Norton Fitzwarren & Cotford St Luke*

145 A local resident and Councillor Sully expressed support for the proposed Norton & Cotford division. However, Councillor Sully, supported by Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council and Cotford St Luke Parish Council, requested that the division use the full names of both communities. We agree that this proposal reflects the distinct identities of Norton Fitzwarren and Cotford St Luke, avoids confusion with other settlements, and will be a locally recognised name. We have therefore adopted Norton Fitzwarren & Cotford St Luke as the division name in our final recommendations.

146 Another local resident suggested that Bishops Lydeard should not be separated from Cotford St Luke, citing shared concerns such as future developments, flooding and rural issues. The respondent proposed a single division encompassing Bishops Lydeard, Cotford St Luke and Norton Fitzwarren. However, a single-councillor division would have a forecast electoral variance of 57%, while a two-councillor division would have a variance of -21%. Neither option provides acceptable electoral equality, so we have not adopted either proposal in our final recommendations.

147 The same local resident suggested that if the draft proposals were retained, the division should be named Cotford & Norton to reflect alphabetical ordering and avoid perceptions of dominance. We were not persuaded by this argument and, for the reasons set out above, are adopting the division name of Norton Fitzwarren & Cotford St Luke in our final recommendations.

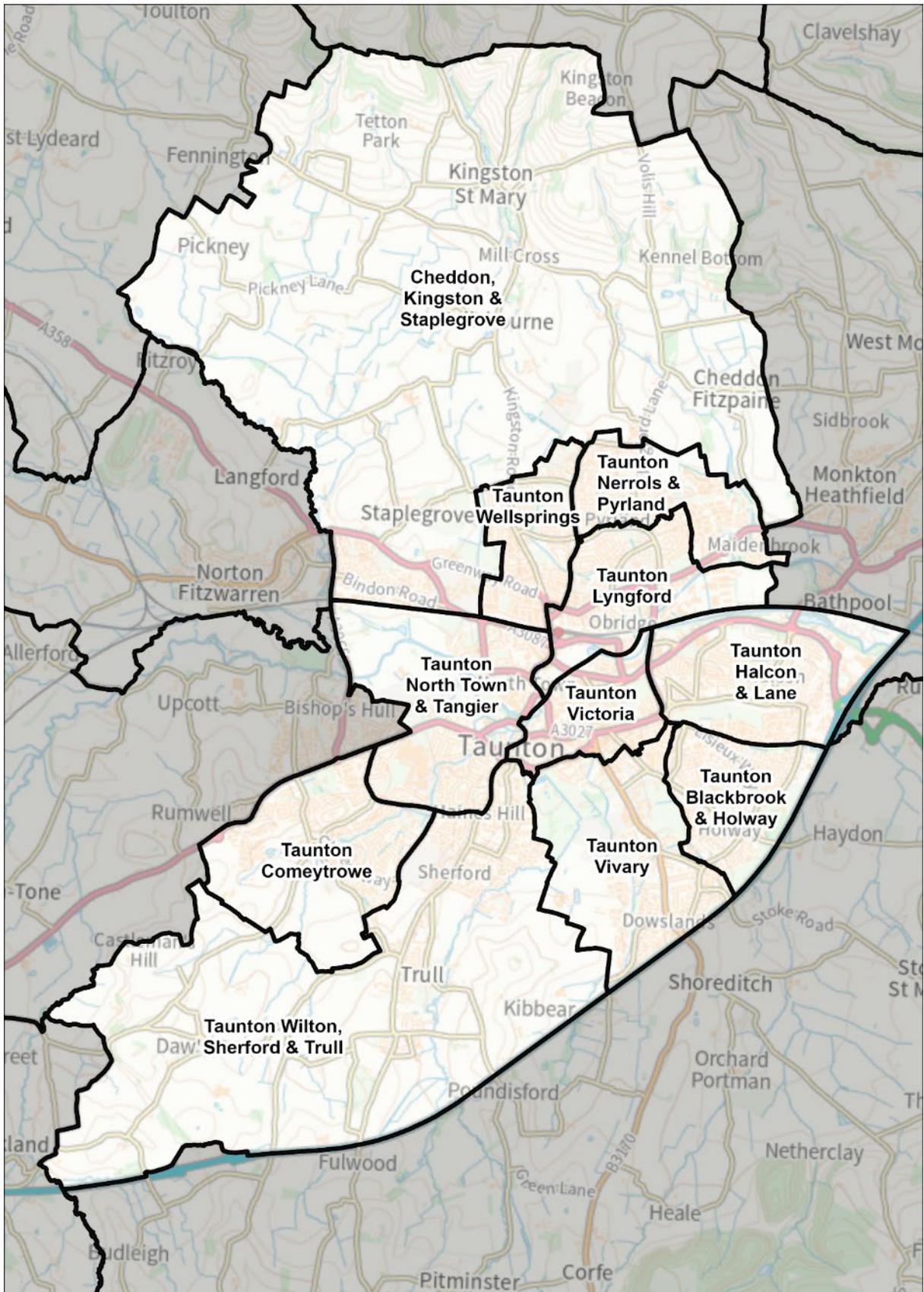
#### *Wiveliscombe*

148 We received a submission from Councillor Mansell supporting our draft recommendations for Wiveliscombe division. They considered the proposed grouping of Milverton and Wiveliscombe parishes in particular to be a good reflection of local community interests. They commented that the parishes included in the proposed division have longstanding shared links, with Wiveliscombe the centre of the division.

149 Councillor Mansell suggested renaming the division Wiveliscombe & District to reflect the inclusion of surrounding parishes. However, we are not adopting this proposal, as we consider the proposed division name of Wiveliscombe to be sufficiently clear and appropriately focused on the main population centre.

150 A local resident also supported the inclusion of Stawley parish in this division. Having considered the evidence received, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Wiveliscombe division as final.

# Taunton



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Cheddon, Kingston & Staplegrove	1	-3%
Taunton Blackbrook & Holway	1	-10%
Taunton Comeytrowe	1	3%
Taunton Halcon & Lane	1	-9%
Taunton Lyngford	1	-10%
Taunton Nerrols & Pyrland	1	-4%
Taunton North Town & Tangier	1	-5%
Taunton Victoria	1	-10%
Taunton Vivary	1	-7%
Taunton Wellsprings	1	-7%
Taunton Wilton, Sherford & Trull	1	-10%

151 We reviewed the Council's earlier proposal for four two-councillor divisions in Taunton in light of the clarified position on single-councillor divisions. However, we remain satisfied that a pattern of single-councillor divisions for Taunton provides the best balance of the statutory criteria. All of the proposed divisions achieve good electoral equality, and we consider each to reflect the constituent communities of the town based on the evidence received during both rounds of consultation.

#### *Cheddon, Kingston & Staplegrove*

152 Kingston St Mary Parish Council, supported by Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council, objected to the inclusion of both parishes within the proposed Taunton Staplegrove division. They argued that the division combines dissimilar urban and rural areas and does not accurately reflect existing community identities. They stated that Kingston St Mary and Cheddon Fitzpaine parishes maintain stronger functional and social links with neighbouring rural parishes via shared ecclesiastical arrangements and a joint community magazine, whereas Staplegrove is more closely associated with the urban area of Taunton.

153 While we acknowledge the evidence presented, we note that Kingston St Mary Parish Council also recognised that it would not be possible to place Kingston St Mary and Cheddon Fitzpaine parishes in an alternative division without unacceptable levels of electoral inequality, which could only be addressed through substantial revisions to adjacent divisions. We are not persuaded that such extensive changes are warranted, based on the evidence received. We therefore propose no changes to boundaries of this division in our final recommendations. However, we agree that the division name of Taunton Staplegrove does not sufficiently reflect the range of communities it contains. We have therefore decided to adopt the alternative name proposed by Kingston St Mary Parish Council of Cheddon, Kingston & Staplegrove in order to better reflect its constituent parishes.

*Taunton Blackbrook & Holway, Taunton Comeytrowe, Taunton Halcon & Lane, Taunton North Town & Tangier and Taunton Vivary*

154 We received no submissions relating to these divisions during consultation, so we have decided to confirm them as part of our final recommendations.

*Taunton Lyngford and Taunton Nerrols & Pyrland*

155 We received several submissions objecting to our proposed division arrangements affecting the area covered by the current Maidenbrook town council ward. Councillor Fraschini (Taunton Town Council), the Taunton & Wellington Labour Party and two local residents opposed the proposed split of Maidenbrook, arguing that it is a cohesive and well-established community with strong historical ties to Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton. They also expressed concern that dividing the area would weaken existing community links and further erode its local identity, which they said had already been affected by the transfer of Maidenbrook into the Taunton Town Council area following a recent Community Governance Review. Respondents also noted that Maidenbrook shares community facilities, open spaces and ongoing projects, such as the Maidenbrook Country Park, with neighbouring parishes. Some local residents also stated that the Nerrols and/or Maidenbrook area should not form part of Taunton, stating that they share a closer affinity with Cheddon Fitzpaine parish.

156 We acknowledge the strength of local feeling about the Maidenbrook and Nerrols area and which division it should be situated in. However, based on our visit to the area, we consider that Maidenbrook and Nerrols form part of the wider built-up area of Taunton. We are therefore not persuaded to link these communities in a division with Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton parishes.

157 We have, nonetheless, been persuaded to adjust the boundaries of these two divisions to place Maidenbrook in the same division as the Nerrols area. From our tour of the area, we determined that Maidenbrook has stronger links with the Nerrols community immediately to its north than with those communities in the Taunton Lyngford division to the west. As result of this change we are recommending further slight amendments to our proposed divisions to achieve good electoral equality. We recommend that the boundary of Taunton Lyngford division move northwards to the rear of properties on Eastwick Road and Buckland Road, and southwards from Priors Bridge Road to Bridge Street, which formed part of the southern boundary of Taunton Lyngford ward under the previous arrangements.

158 Councillor Baker objected to the proposal that Taunton Lyngford and Taunton Pyrland form separate single-member divisions. They argued that the areas covered by both divisions form a single community linked across the A3259, with shared organisations, services and community groups, and that residents regard the wider area as integrated. Councillor Baker considered that creating two divisions would

undermine this shared identity and proposed that the area form a single two-member division.

159 We have carefully considered this view but are not persuaded to adopt a two-member division. While we acknowledge the evidence submitted regarding joint community activity, we consider that Lyngford and Pyrland represent distinct communities. In our assessment, these links reflect typical cooperation between neighbouring areas rather than a common identity that would justify a two-member division. On balance, we are satisfied that two single-member divisions provide a clearer division arrangement which adequately reflects the pattern of local communities in this part of Taunton, while also securing good levels of electoral equality.

160 Councillor Deakin suggested that Taunton Lyngford and Taunton Pyrland be renamed Taunton Lyngford & Maidenbrook and Taunton Nerrols & Pyrland, respectively. We have adopted the latter proposal as we consider it be more reflective of the constituent communities of this division. However, we have not adopted the former, following our decision to transfer the Maidenbrook area from our Taunton Lyngford division.

161 A local resident considered that Trenchard Way and the area around the railway station do not form part of the Lyngford community. They suggested that the ward be renamed Taunton Priorswood, noting that Priorswood Road is a main route through the area and that Priorswood shops and the Priorswood Community Centre are recognised local centres. As an alternative, the respondent also suggested the name Taunton Obridge. While we have considered these suggestions, we are not persuaded to change the division name. We consider that Lyngford remains the main community within the division and that the name Taunton Lyngford appropriately reflects this. We also note that previous electoral arrangements included wards of similar configurations using the same name, meaning it has local recognition. We therefore confirm the name Taunton Lyngford as final.

### *Taunton Wellsprings*

162 The Taunton & Wellington Labour Party proposed that the area between Bindon Road and Staplegrove Road be moved from Taunton Staplegrove division to Taunton Wellsprings division. To balance the electorate as a result of this change, they stated that the area between Cheddon Road and Kingston Road could move to either Taunton Pyrland or Taunton Lyngford divisions, with electors east of Bossington Drive and the A358 roundabout moved into Taunton Staplegrove division. After careful consideration, we have decided not to adopt these proposals. We were not persuaded that sufficient community evidence had been received to support such significant modifications to our proposed divisions in the north of Taunton.

163 One local resident supported our proposal to move the division boundary to Cheddon Road. They commented that the previous district council arrangements included Kilve Crescent, Kilve Close, Enmore Road and part of Wellsprings Road in Taunton Lyngford ward, which had not reflected community identity, as they argued that residents of this area identify more closely with the Wellsprings community. We agree that Cheddon Road forms a clearer and more identifiable boundary between the Wellsprings and Lyngford areas. Accordingly, we confirm this boundary and our wider recommendations for this division as final.

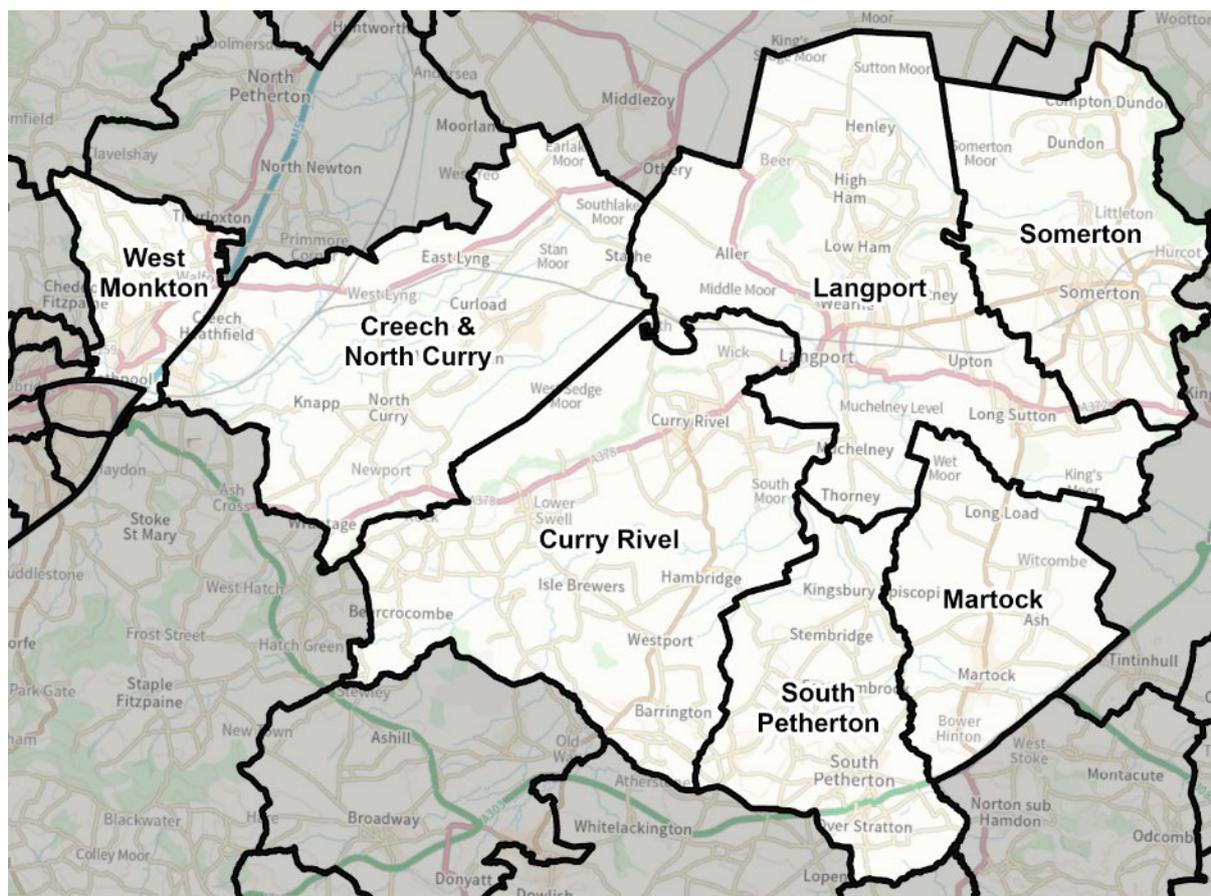
#### *Taunton Wilton, Sherford & Trull*

164 Our proposed Taunton Wilton, Sherford & Trull division was supported by Councillor Naughton of Trull Parish Council, who highlighted the close geographical proximity and transport links across the division's communities. Councillor Naughton also emphasised the shared rural green corridor along the Sherford Stream, which connects and benefits both the Sherford and Trull communities. Councillor Naughton also stated that having a single councillor representing the area would provide clearer and more effective local representation than the current arrangements. We therefore confirm this division as final.

#### *Taunton Victoria*

165 The Taunton & Wellington Labour Party suggested that minor adjustments could be made between Taunton Lyngford and Taunton Victoria divisions to enable the railway line to form the boundary between them. We recognise that this would provide a clearer and more identifiable boundary; however, as our final Taunton Lyngford division is forecast to have an electoral variance of –10% by 2031, any reduction in its electorate would result in poorer levels of electoral equality. On this basis, we have not adopted the proposal as part of our final recommendations.

## Langport and Somerton



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Creech & North Curry	1	7%
Curry Rivel	1	-6%
Langport	1	8%
Martock	1	2%
Somerton	1	9%
South Petherton	1	0%
West Monkton	1	5%

### *Creech & North Curry*

166 We received two submissions supporting our draft recommendations for Creech & North Curry division. North Curry Parish Council considered the grouping of parishes to be a sensible reflection of shared services and local issues in the area. A local resident also welcomed the decision to include Stoke St Gregory parish within this division, stating that it forms part of the same community area as North Curry and Creech St Michael parishes. In light of this support, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Creech & North Curry division as final.

### *Curry Rivel and Langport*

167 Muchelney Parish Meeting expressed concern about being placed in a different division from Langport and Huish Episcopi parishes, emphasising that Muchelney has long-standing and practical ties with both communities. They explained that, as a parish meeting, Muchelney often seeks occasional guidance from the respective chairs of Langport Town Council and Huish Episcopi Parish Council, and that residents sometimes attend meetings of those councils to raise local matters. The Parish Meeting also highlighted that Muchelney shares its northern boundary with Huish Episcopi, reinforcing these connections. It stated that being included in a Curry Rivel-based division does not reflect Muchelney's community identity, as it shares few administrative or social links with Curry Rivel.

168 We have been persuaded by the evidence received that Muchelney parish should be located in the same division as Langport and Huish Episcopi parishes. We have therefore transferred Muchelney into Langport division as part of our final recommendations.

169 Langport Town Council noted that the proposed Curry Rivel division includes the hamlets of Westover, Portfield and Portway, and argued that these areas identify more closely with Langport than with Curry Rivel. While we acknowledge their close geographic proximity to Langport, these settlements lie within Curry Rivel parish. Transferring them to Langport division would require splitting Curry Rivel parish between divisions and creating additional parish warding arrangements. We were not persuaded that such changes would support effective and convenient local government for Curry Rivel parish. We therefore recommend that the boundary between Curry Rivel and Langport divisions should follow the existing parish boundaries of Curry Rivel, Huish Episcopi and Langport.

### *South Petherton*

170 We received no submissions relating to this division during consultation. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

### *Martock*

171 A local resident suggested that Martock should be linked with Yeovil, arguing that under the proposed arrangements Martock remains isolated. We were not persuaded by this argument, as the two communities are distinct and geographically somewhat distant. We consider a division focused on Martock itself to be preferable and have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Martock division as final.

### *Somerton*

172 As part of our draft recommendations, we determined that Compton Dundon, as a smaller and predominantly rural parish, may share stronger community ties with the rural settlements in our Avalon division. However, we welcomed feedback during

consultation on whether the residents of Compton Dundon feel a stronger community connection with Somerton or with the more rural areas included in our Avalon division.

173 During consultation, Compton Dundon Parish Council, Councillor Kerley, Councillor Walker and two local residents objected to the inclusion of Compton Dundon parish in Avalon division. The respondents noted that the parish has longstanding social, economic and historical links with Somerton, including shopping, services, schools and community activities. They highlighted physical barriers which limit connections to areas in the proposed Avalon division and noted that the parish has traditionally been paired with Somerton in previous council arrangements. All five submissions argued that placing the parish in a division with Somerton parish would better reflect local community identities. We have been persuaded by this evidence and have therefore adopted the proposal to place Compton Dundon parish in Somerton division as part of our final recommendations.

174 In light of the corrected position regarding single-councillor divisions, we re-examined the submissions made by Councillor Page and two local residents during the first consultation, who supported retaining the current two-councillor Somerton division. However, the evidence provided did not present a compelling case for maintaining this arrangement. Furthermore, given the overall reduction in councillor numbers across Somerset, retaining a two-councillor division in this area would require significant alterations to the surrounding division pattern. We have therefore decided to confirm our recommendation for a single-councillor division pattern in this area.

#### *West Monkton*

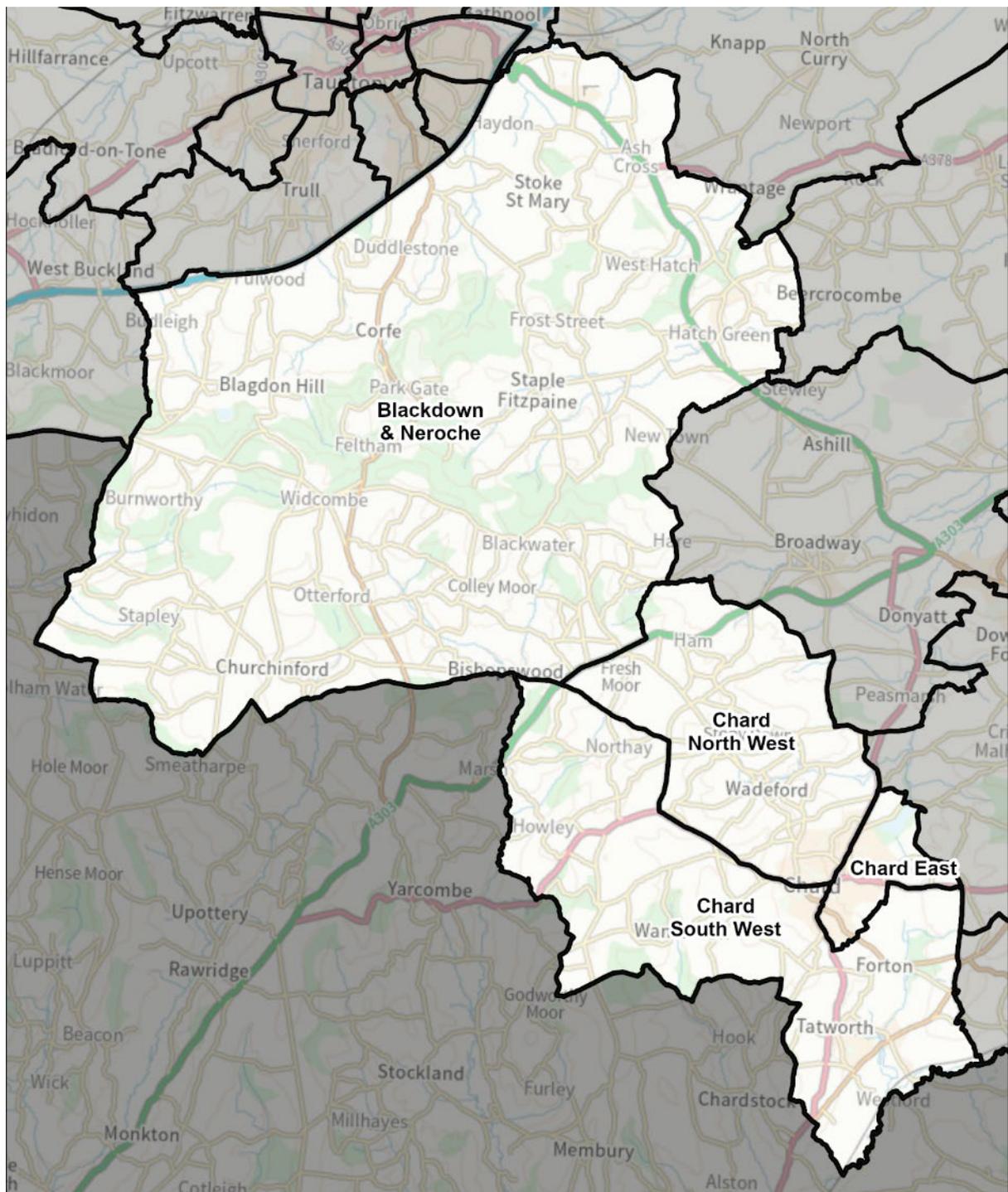
175 West Monkton Parish Council supported our proposed West Monkton division. Although one local resident opposed the proposal, the parish council welcomed the use of the M5 motorway as a clear and identifiable boundary between the Creech & North Curry and West Monkton divisions. West Monkton Parish Council also suggested extending the boundary further south to Junction 25 to simplify it, noting that this change would not affect any electors. We considered this suggestion but did not adopt it, as it would require the creation of a parish ward for West Monkton parish with no electors, which would not support effective or convenient local government. For the same reasons, we did not adopt the Parish Council's other proposals to include Maidenbrook Country Park in the division or to use the A38 as a boundary. These changes would create parish wards with little or no electors in Cheddon Fitzpaine and Creech St Michael parishes, respectively.

176 Creech St Michael Parish Council stated that the electorate forecasts used in the draft recommendations were inaccurate for its area and requested that the proposed divisions be reconsidered. However, no specific evidence was provided to demonstrate how or to what extent the figures were incorrect.

177 As set out earlier in this report, in accordance with legislation, our recommendations must be based on an electorate forecast set at five years following the publication of our final recommendations. The data we have used was supplied by Somerset Council and represents the most robust figures available to us. Moreover, we note that significant development is expected in the parish, west of the M5, which is already reflected in the forecast figures. On this basis, we remain satisfied that the proposed division will achieve good electoral equality by 2031.

178 In light of the corrected position regarding single-councillor divisions, we re-examined the submissions from West Monkton Parish Council and Councillor Cavill, who supported maintaining a link between West Monkton and Creech St Michael parishes. This would have required a two-councillor division to achieve electoral equality. However, we remain satisfied that separate single-councillor Creech & North Curry and West Monkton divisions provide an effective balance of the statutory criteria. Both achieve good electoral equality and are separated by the clear and identifiable boundary of the M5 motorway.

## Chard and the Blackdown Hills



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Blackdown & Neroche	1	10%
Chard East	1	4%
Chard North West	1	7%
Chard South West	1	-6%

### *Blackdown & Neroche*

179 A local resident proposed that Beercrocombe and Curry Mallet parishes be included in Blackdown & Neroche division so that the entire Seven Sowers Benefice would fall within a single division. We have decided not to adopt this proposal as part of our final recommendations as it would result in the division having electoral inequality. The proposed division already has a forecast electoral variance of 10% and expanding it further would worsen this variance.

180 Another local resident opposed the inclusion of Ruishton parish in this division. They stated that Ruishton lies on the opposite side of the A358 from the remainder of the division. They also argued that it is a much larger settlement which borders Taunton and contrasted it with the remainder of Blackdown & Neroche division which covers a predominantly rural area. While we recognise these concerns, we have not adopted this proposal as part of our final recommendations. In particular we note that transferring the grouped parishes of Ruishton and Thornfalcon from the division would result in Blackdown & Neroche being too small in terms of electorate which would therefore result in a high electoral variance.

181 We have therefore retained the proposed division boundaries in our final recommendations.

### *Chard East, Chard North West and Chard South West*

182 We received a submission from the Yeovil Constituency Liberal Democrats opposing our draft recommendations for Chard. They argued that dividing the town between rural and urban areas would not reflect community identity and would weaken local representation.

183 A local resident also objected to the proposed split of Chard, suggesting that the town be represented by more compact urban divisions, with surrounding parishes forming a separate rural division. Another local resident also stated that Chard should be split into east and west divisions.

184 We have carefully considered these views but remain satisfied that our draft proposals for Chard provide the best balance between the statutory criteria. As set out in the draft recommendations, Chard parish is too large to be represented by two councillors without incorporating nearby rural areas, which would otherwise result in unacceptable electoral inequality. We consider that the inclusion of adjacent rural parishes within the proposed Chard North West and Chard South West divisions reflects logical and appropriate links with those parts of the town and minimises electoral variances for the wider area.

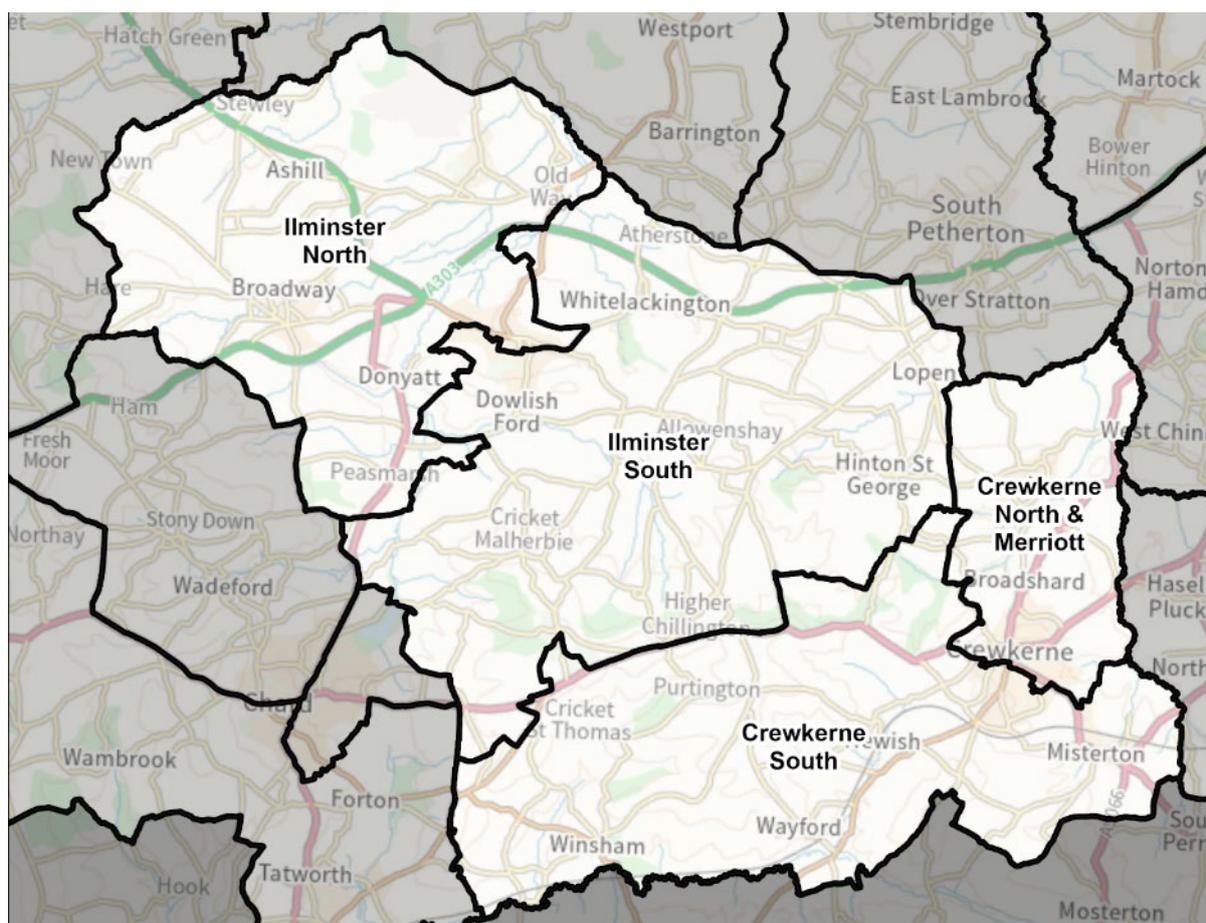
185 A local resident suggested that the area around Forton Road and Jocelyn Park would be better placed in Chard South West rather than Chard East division. We are not adopting this proposal as part of our final recommendations because we are

persuaded that the A358 provides a clear and identifiable boundary between these two divisions.

186 In light of the corrected position regarding single-councillor divisions, we also remain of the view that the single-councillor divisions proposed in our draft recommendations for Chard represent an effective balance of our statutory criteria. We are of the view that the multi-member divisions proposed for this area during the course of the review would not improve the balance between electoral equality, community identity and effective and convenient local government.

187 Given our decision to not make any changes to our three Chard divisions, we therefore confirm our draft recommendations for them as final.

## Crewkerne and Ilminster



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Crewkerne North & Merriott	1	2%
Crewkerne South	1	9%
Ilminster North	1	5%
Ilminster South	1	-3%

### *Crewkerne North & Merriott and Crewkerne South*

188 We received objections to our draft recommendations for Crewkerne, including submissions from Crewkerne Town Council, the Yeovil Constituency Liberal Democrats, Councillor Ashton, and two local residents. They opposed the separation of the town across two divisions, arguing that this would undermine community cohesion, dilute representation, and fail to reflect Crewkerne's identity as a single, self-contained community.

189 Crewkerne Town Council and others also argued that linking parts of Crewkerne with surrounding rural parishes, such as Merriott, did not reflect shared community interests or local governance patterns. Councillor Ashton similarly

objected to the inclusion of Merriott within the same division as northern Crewkerne, stating that the two areas have little in common.

190 We have considered these representations carefully. However, as outlined in our draft recommendations, Crewkerne's electorate is too small to be represented by two single-councillor divisions within the town's boundaries, and too large to form a single-councillor division that aligns with the parish boundary and achieve good electoral equality. We remain of the view that including surrounding parishes in both the proposed Crewkerne North and Crewkerne South divisions provides a division pattern that minimises electoral variances and reflects practical community links between the town and adjoining areas.

191 We have also decided not to transfer the parishes of Cricket St Thomas and Winsham from Crewkerne South division into Ilminster South. While the Somerset Liberal Democrats suggested that such a modification would better reflect local ties, we note that it would result in our Ilminster South division having a forecast electoral variance of 11%, which we consider is not justified based on the evidence received. We also note previous evidence from Councillor Rich of Winsham Parish Council, who indicated that Winsham parish has closer community ties with Crewkerne than with other neighbouring towns, and from Councillor Osborne, who previously stated that Cricket St Thomas parish shares close links with Winsham parish.

192 We also considered Councillor Ashton's objection to moving from the existing two-member division to single-member divisions, noting their view that multi-member divisions had previously worked well for covering absences and representing parish interests. However, we remain satisfied that two single-councillor divisions for Crewkerne provide the best reflection of the statutory criteria. In particular, we consider that the evidence provided did not demonstrate that a two-member division would offer a better reflection of community identity than two single-councillor divisions. We therefore confirm our recommendation for two single-councillor divisions covering Crewkerne and its adjacent parishes.

#### *Ilminster North and Ilminster South*

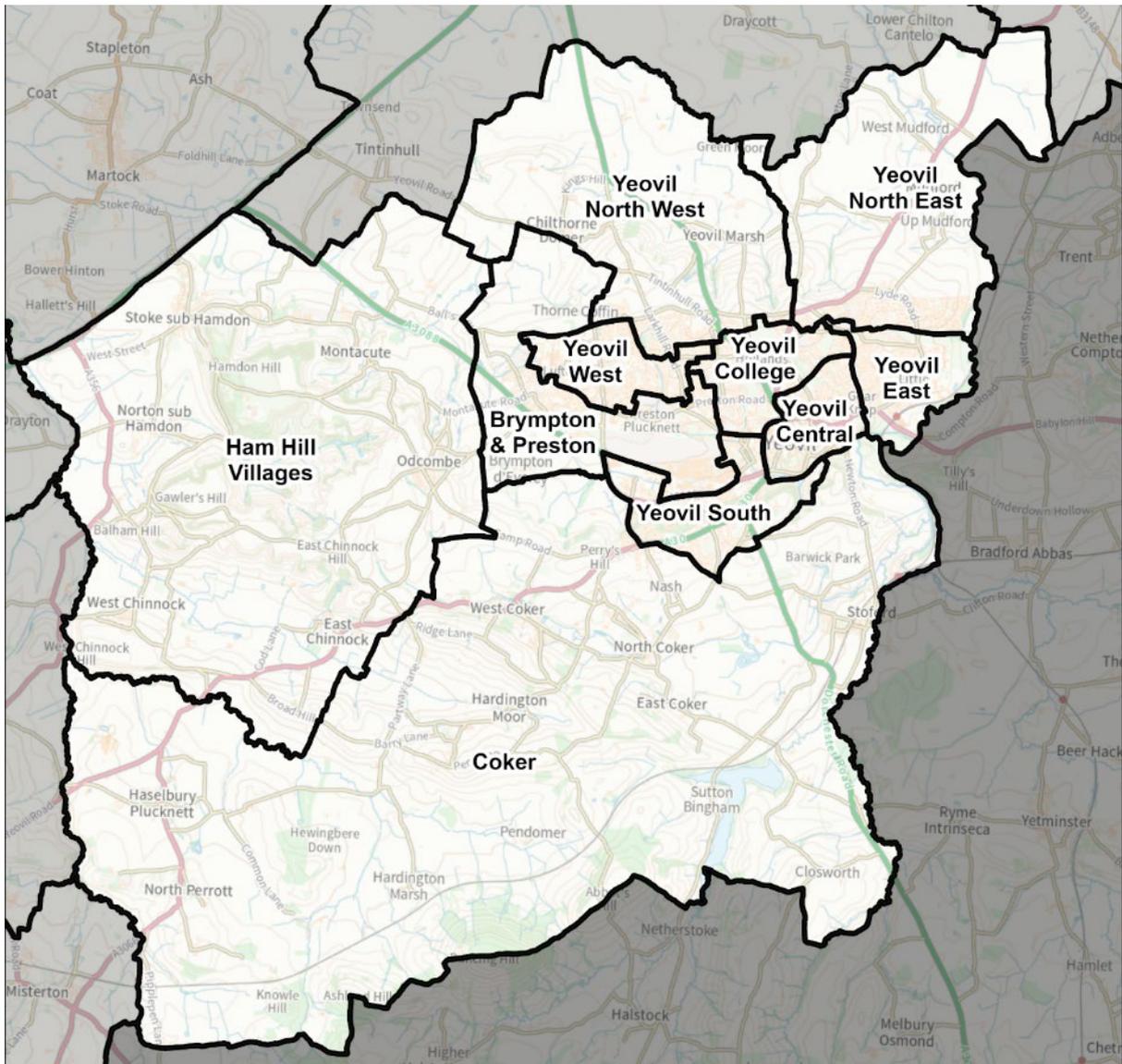
193 We received three submissions raising concerns about the proposed split of Ilminster across two mixed rural–urban divisions. The Somerset Liberal Democrats, Yeovil Constituency Liberal Democrats and a local resident argued that linking parts of urban Ilminster with surrounding rural areas could undermine community cohesion, local identity and effective representation. They all suggested an alternative arrangement that would keep the parish of Ilminster whole within a single division, while grouping the surrounding rural areas in a separate division.

194 We were not persuaded to adopt these proposals. We determined that the evidence provided did not demonstrate a sufficiently strong enough case to justify substantial changes to our draft recommendations. Based on the submissions

received during both consultation stages, we remain satisfied that the Ilminster North and Ilminster South divisions provide an appropriate balance of electoral equality and effective representation, while reflecting the statutory criteria.

195 Hinton St George Parish Council stated that neighbouring Somerset councillors should maintain regular engagement with one another. They suggested that, should divisions be represented by a single councillor, such cooperation would ensure that a neighbouring member is familiar with local matters and able to support parish councils and residents in the event of a councillor's long-term absence. While we acknowledge these concerns, we consider the practical arrangements for member cooperation to be a matter for the Council rather than something that can be secured through this electoral review.

## Yeovil



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Brympton & Preston	1	-1%
Coker	1	-4%
Ham Hill Villages	1	-3%
Yeovil Central	1	7%
Yeovil College	1	5%
Yeovil East	1	-6%
Yeovil North East	1	0%
Yeovil North West	1	-7%
Yeovil South	1	0%
Yeovil West	1	-2%

*Brympton & Preston, Yeovil College and Yeovil West*

196 Councillor Seib stated that the proposed Brympton & Preston division would create an excessive workload for a single councillor, due to the number of non-residential sites included, such as industrial estates, businesses and public service locations. They proposed adjusting the division boundary to follow Lufton Way, Artillery Road, the rear of George Smith Way and Thorne Lane. This would result in the transfer of non-residential properties to neighbouring divisions without affecting the number of electors, while also ensuring Houndstone Retail Park is contained in a single division. Additionally, Councillor Seib suggested that the division boundary follow the southern edge of Westland Airfield, so that it aligns with the landholding boundary, simplifying the representation of non-residential interests. We have adopted these modifications in our final recommendations, on the basis that they provide clearer boundaries that follow ground detail. In this way, they will provide for effective and convenient local government.

197 Councillor Seib also raised concerns regarding the splitting of the Westfield community between the Yeovil West and Yeovil College divisions, noting that previous boundary arrangements had diluted local engagement and complicated representation. On this basis, Councillor Seib expressed concern that a single-councillor division pattern for the west of Yeovil may not reflect our statutory criteria. A local resident also objected to the boundary along Westfield Road and Coronation Avenue up to the Yeovil Without Parish boundary, suggesting that it would be preferable to move the boundary further west. We have adopted the local resident's proposed boundary adjustment, as we are content that this change will help facilitate more effective representation for the Westfield community. However, we did not adopt the wider proposals suggested by Councillor Seib. While we recognise the concerns raised, we were not persuaded that the alternative division pattern they suggested would provide clearer boundaries or a better balance between community identity and electoral equality than our draft recommendations.

198 Within the Somerset Liberal Democrats' submission, Councillor Read requested that electors residing on Burroughes Avenue, Cedar Grove, Home Drive, part of Preston Road and Summerlands be transferred from our proposed Brympton & Preston division into Yeovil West division. We did not adopt this proposal, as it would result in an electoral variance of -11% for Brympton & Preston. We do not consider that sufficient community evidence was provided to justify this variance.

199 A local resident highlighted that the current boundary splits the Abbey Manor estate between Yeovil Town Council and Brympton Parish Council, resulting in different precepts for neighbouring households. They supported our Brympton & Preston division on the assumption that electors in Abbey Manor would pay an equal precept. While our proposed division arrangements have no impact on parish precept levels, we consider the proposed boundary with Yeovil West division is

preferable to following the existing Brympton and Yeovil parish boundary, which currently bisects Abbey Manor and parts of Yeovil.

### *Coker*

200 A local resident expressed disappointment that Sampson's Wood parish ward of West Coker parish was not included in our proposed Coker division. They highlighted that, although the area lies adjacent to Yeovil's urban edge, it retains close links with West Coker parish. They also argued that West Coker Parish Council continues to represent residents and manage local facilities there. While we recognise the strength of these local connections, we maintain the view that Sampson's Wood forms part of the wider Yeovil urban area, and that its inclusion within a Yeovil-based division provides for clearer boundaries along the A30 and A3088. We have therefore retained Sampson's Wood in our proposed Yeovil South division and confirm our Coker division as final.

### *Ham Hill Villages*

201 We received three submissions relating to our proposed Hamdon & Chinnock division. Two local residents supported the draft recommendations, both noting that the proposed division unites communities with strong links. One respondent also welcomed the inclusion of Montacute parish, which they felt better reflected local connections.

202 Two local residents suggested renaming the division Ham Hill Villages, arguing that this name would more accurately reflect the shared identity of the area. They also noted that the name would reflect the title of the local parish magazine that covers the same communities. We also note the presence of Ham Hill Country Park in the centre of the division, which is a shared local amenity. We agree that this name provides a clearer reflection of the geography and community identity of the division and have therefore adopted it in our final recommendations.

### *Yeovil Central*

203 We received no submissions relating to this division during consultation. We therefore confirm it as part of our final recommendations.

### *Yeovil East*

204 Within the Somerset Liberal Democrats' submission, Councillor Lock requested the electors residing near the Buckler's Mead Leisure Centre be transferred from the proposed Yeovil College division to Yeovil East division. We have decided to adopt this relatively minor amendment as part of our final recommendations, as we are content that it follows a clear and logical boundary.

### *Yeovil South*

205 Subject to the change to the boundary with Brympton & Preston division, we propose no further changes to this division and therefore confirm it as final.

### *Yeovil North East and Yeovil North West*

206 Yeovil Without Parish Council supported the draft recommendations for Yeovil North West and Yeovil North East divisions. It considered that allocating two councillors across these divisions represented a significant improvement on the existing arrangements, under which the parish was split across three divisions and thereby represented by six councillors. Yeovil Without Parish Council also stated that the draft pattern better reflected its established community identity and communication links. It did, however, request a revised pattern of parish wards, which we have addressed in the Parish electoral arrangements section of this report.

207 Mudford Parish Council requested that the parish be removed from Yeovil North East division and placed in Ilchester division with Chilton Cantelo parish. The Parish Council cited longstanding social, cultural and administrative ties between the two parishes as justification for this change. It argued that Mudford's rural identity differed from the more urban character of Yeovil and that alignment with Ilchester would provide for a better reflection of community identities.

208 We have carefully considered this request but have not been persuaded to adopt it as part of our final recommendations. Removing Mudford parish from Yeovil North East division would lead to unacceptable electoral inequality. We also note the supporting evidence from Yeovil Without Parish Council in favour of retaining Mudford within Yeovil North East division, citing shared educational and community facilities. We consider that the draft recommendations offer an appropriate balance between community identity and electoral equality, and we are therefore confirming our Yeovil North East division as final.

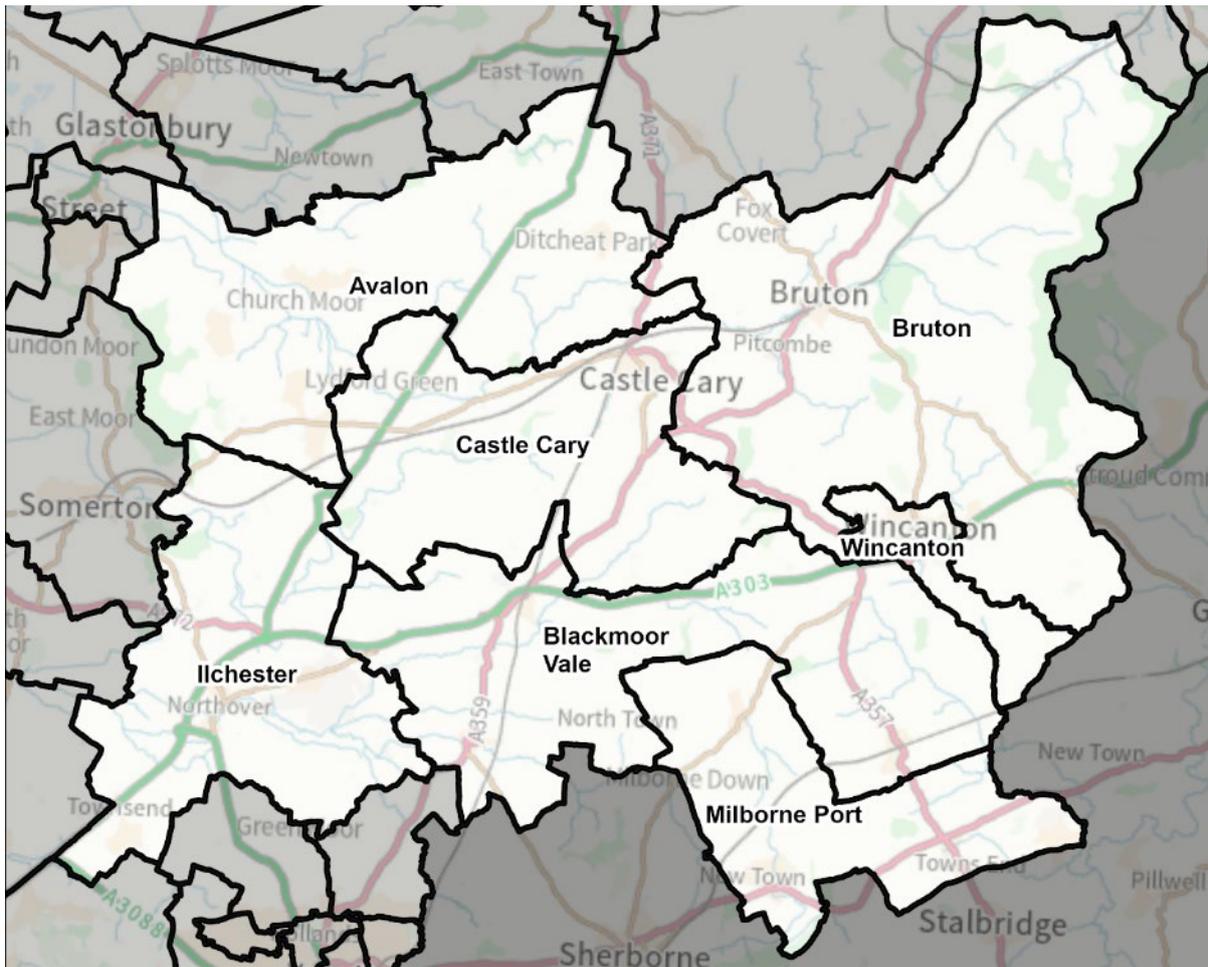
209 Councillor Woan, as part of the submission from the Somerset Liberal Democrats, proposed transferring electors on Combe Street Lane and Combe Close from Yeovil North West division into Yeovil College division. We have not adopted this proposal. We consider that placing the division boundary along the parish boundary of Yeovil and Yeovil Without, which lies just to the south of this area, will provide for effective and convenient local government. We are therefore confirming our recommended Yeovil North West division as final.

210 Chilthorne Domer Parish Council preferred that we retain a multi-councillor division for the area, reflecting the existing arrangements. It commented that multi-councillor representation has worked well locally, enabling councillors to share workloads, improving attendance at parish council meetings and supporting effective communication. It also noted that the arrangement provides resilience when a councillor is unavailable and gives electors a choice of representatives to contact.

211 While we recognise Chilthorne Domer Parish Council's preference, we were not persuaded that creating a multi-councillor division by combining our proposed Yeovil

North West division with neighbouring areas would improve the balance between electoral equality, community identity and effective and convenient local government. We therefore do not propose to adopt this approach in our final recommendations.

## Wincanton and Castle Cary



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2031
Avalon	1	-5%
Blackmoor Vale	1	8%
Bruton	1	-4%
Castle Cary	1	10%
Ilchester	1	-10%
Milborne Port	1	-2%
Wincanton	1	9%

### *Avalon*

212 Baltonsborough Parish Council and Barton St David Parish Council both supported our proposed Avalon division. Councillor Manning, of Glastonbury Town Council, opposed the division name, stating that Avalon is primarily associated with Glastonbury. They suggested an alternative should be used, though none was provided. We have considered this view but are not persuaded to change the proposed division name in the absence of a suggested alternative.

213 A local resident objected to Keinton Mandeville parish being included in Avalon division, expressing concern that the size of the division would make adequate representation difficult. We have considered this concern but are not persuaded to change the proposed arrangements, as transferring the parish from Avalon division would result it being significantly undersized in terms of elector numbers, resulting in electoral inequality. We therefore confirm our Avalon division as final, subject to the transfer of Compton Dundon parish to Somerton division, as outlined in the Somerton section of this report.

#### *Blackmoor Vale and Milborne Port*

214 We received six submissions regarding the proposed Blackmoor Vale and Milborne divisions. Milborne Port Parish Council supported the latter division. A local resident objected to the inclusion of Abbas & Templecombe parish in Blackmoor Vale division, arguing that the village has closer community links with Milborne Port and should instead be included in Milborne division.

215 Councillor Petheram of Henstridge Parish Council and a local resident both objected to the inclusion of Henstridge parish within Milborne division. They argued that the parish shares stronger connections with parishes along the A357 and it would be better grouped in a division with these neighbouring communities.

216 Councillor Graham, also of Henstridge Parish Council, objected to linking Henstridge with parishes along the A303, noting that residents' strongest links are with Templecombe, Wincanton, Milborne Port and Yeovil through shared services such as schools and shops.

217 We have carefully considered this evidence in respect of this area but not been persuaded to make changes to the proposed Blackmoor Vale and Milborne divisions as part of our final recommendations. On balance, we consider that the draft divisions appropriately provide for electoral equality and community representation. We note that adopting any of the suggested changes would create divisions with high electoral variances.

218 A local resident also requested that the division be named Milborne Port. We have decided to adopt this proposal as we consider that using the full name of the constituent parish provides a more accurate and recognisable description of the division. We also note that previous wards under the former South Somerset District Council used this name, which indicates that it has established local recognition.

#### *Bruton*

219 Councillor Trimnell expressed support for the proposed boundaries for Bruton division, noting that they had not heard any opposition from residents or parishes within the area. They stated that the division was geographically large but considered the proposed name, Bruton, to be appropriate as it is the only town within

the division. With no further submissions received relating to our proposed Bruton division, we have decided to confirm it as final.

#### *Castle Cary and Ilchester*

220 The grouped parish council of North Cadbury & Yarlinton supported its inclusion in Castle Cary division. However, Bab Cary Parish Council objected to the parish's inclusion in Ilchester division, arguing that it has longstanding social, economic, educational and community links with Castle Cary. We found this evidence persuasive and have therefore adopted the proposal to include Bab Cary parish in Castle Cary division as part of our final recommendations.

221 Accordingly, subject to the transfer of Bab Cary parish between these two divisions, we confirm our draft Castle Cary and Ilchester divisions as final.

#### *Wincanton*

222 We received no submissions relating to Wincanton division during consultation. We therefore confirm it as final.



## Conclusions

223 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Somerset, referencing the 2024 and 2031 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and divisions. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found in Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided in Appendix B.

### Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2024	2031
Number of councillors	96	96
Number of electoral divisions	93	93
Average number of electors per councillor	4,653	4,867
Number of divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average	27	2
Number of divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average	7	0

#### Final recommendations

Somerset Council should be made up of 96 councillors serving 90 single-councillor divisions and three two-councillor divisions. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

#### Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed divisions for Somerset Council. You can also view our final recommendations for Somerset Council on our interactive maps at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

### Parish electoral arrangements

224 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different divisions it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

225 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority division arrangements. However, Somerset Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

226 As a result of our proposed division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for the parish and town councils of Bridgwater, Bridgwater Without, Brympton, Burnham Without, Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge, Chard, Creech St Michael, Crewkerne, Frome, Glastonbury, Ilminster, North Petherton, St Cuthbert (Out), Shepton Mallet, Street, Taunton, Wellington, Wembdon, West Huntspill, Yeovil and Yeovil Without.

227 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Bridgwater parish. Councillor Rodrigues and Councillor Slocombe requested that the existing Hamp parish ward be subdivided into separate Elmwood and Hamp parish wards, stating that this would better reflect community identities and enable a more proportionate allocation of councillors. We are content to adopt this proposal, satisfied that it will facilitate effective and convenient local government for the town council.

228 Councillor Slocombe also commented on wider town council warding arrangements. They observed that the existing Wyndham parish ward is effectively represented by two councillors and retains strong internal cohesion. She therefore opposed the creation of a separate Northfield parish ward and instead supported the retention of the current configuration. However, we are unable to retain the existing parish ward arrangement because of our statutory obligation to ensure that each parish ward is wholly contained within a single division. We cannot recommend town council wards that straddle division boundaries and, for this reason, we are also unable to adopt the alternative warding patterns proposed by Bridgwater Town Council and the Bridgwater Constituency Labour Party. Nonetheless, where appropriate, we have amended parish ward names to reflect the suggestions of Bridgwater Town Council.

### Final recommendations

Bridgwater Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing 11 wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Dunwear North	1
Dunwear South	1
Eastover	1
Elmwood	1

Fairfax East	2
Fairfax West	2
Hamp	2
Northfield	1
Victoria	2
Westover	2
Wyndham	1

229 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Bridgwater Without parish.

#### Final recommendations

Bridgwater Without Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Bower	2
Kingsdown	5

230 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Brympton parish.

#### Final recommendations

Brympton Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Abbey Manor	5
Brympton	5
Merlin Woods	2

231 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Burnham Without parish.

#### Final recommendations

Burnham Without Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Brue	2
Edithmead	1
Marine	3
Watchfield	1

232 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge parish. In our draft recommendations, we invited Burnham-on-Sea &

Highbridge Town Council's views on whether our proposed Burnham South and Highbridge North town council wards should be merged to achieve a more equitable distribution of town councillors across the parish. In response, the Town Council supported this approach. We have therefore merged the two parish wards to form a single four-councillor Burnham-on-Sea South & Highbridge North town council ward in our final recommendations.

#### Final recommendations

Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Burnham-on-Sea Central	5
Burnham-on-Sea North	4
Burnham-on-Sea South & Highbridge North	4
Highbridge South	5

233 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Chard parish.

#### Final recommendations

Chard Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Avishayes	3
Combe	3
Crimchard	3
Holyrood	3
Jocelyn	3

234 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Creech St Michael parish.

#### Final recommendations

Creech St Michael Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Creech St Michael	9
Monkton Heathfield	2

235 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Crewkerne parish.

#### Final recommendations

Crewkerne Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
North	6
South	6

236 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Frome parish. During consultation, Frome Town Council requested that Market parish ward and Keyford parish ward be renamed as Market & Keyford and The Mount, respectively. We have adopted the latter name change, as we agree it will more accurately reflect the geography and identity of the area concerned. We also propose splitting the previously proposed Market town council ward into separate Market and Keyford wards, to reflect the distinct identity of the Keyford area, following evidence received during consultation.

#### Final recommendations

Frome Town Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Berkley Down	3
College	2
Critchill	1
Innox	1
Keyford	2
Market	2
Oakfield	3
Park	2
The Mount	1

237 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Glastonbury parish.

#### Final recommendations

Glastonbury Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
St Benedict's	4
St Edmund's	4
St John's	4
St Mary's	4

238 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Ilminster parish.

**Final recommendations**

Ilminster Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
North	7
South	8

239 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for North Petherton parish. Our draft parish wards were supported by North Petherton Town Council, which agreed that they retain the existing structure in most respects. It also supported retaining the current number of parish councillors and the proposed allocation of members across wards.

**Final recommendations**

North Petherton Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Hamp Bridge	1
North Newton	1
North Petherton	5
Northmoor Green	1
Stockmoor & Willstock	6

240 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for St Cuthbert (Out) parish.

**Final recommendations**

St Cuthbert (Out) Parish Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Coxley	5
Dinder & Dulcote	1
Easton	1
Horrington	4
Wookey Hole	6

241 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Shepton Mallet parish.

**Final recommendations**

Shepton Mallet Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	9
West	7

242 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Street parish.

**Final recommendations**

Street Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
North	7
South	6
West	3

243 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Taunton parish. We have recommended that Maidenbrook parish ward be renamed Nerrols & Maidenbrook to reflect division boundary changes and evidence supplied by Councillor Deakin and a local resident.

**Final recommendations**

Taunton Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing 14 wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Blackbrook & Holway	2
Comeytrove	2
Halcon & Lane	2
Lyngford	1
Manor & Tangier	1
Nerrols & Maidenbrook	1
North Town	1
Obridge	1
Pyrland	1
Staplegrove	1
Victoria	2
Vivary	2
Wellsprings & Rowbarton	2

244 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Wellington parish.

#### Final recommendations

Wellington Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	6
Rockwell Green	3
West	6

245 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Wembdon parish.

#### Final recommendations

Wembdon Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Victoria	3
Wembdon	7

246 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for West Huntspill parish.

#### Final recommendations

West Huntspill Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Alstone	2
West Huntspill	5

247 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Yeovil parish.

#### Final recommendations

Yeovil Town Council should comprise 24 councillors, as at present, representing six wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Central	6
College	5
Lyde	5
Preston Plucknett	2
Summerlands	2

248 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Yeovil Without parish. Yeovil Without Parish Council proposed an alternative internal warding arrangement that would divide the parish into two wards aligned with the boundaries of the proposed unitary divisions. We have adopted these revised parish ward boundaries, as we agree that they will reflect community identity and ensure effective governance. However, we are recommending a different distribution of parish councillors than the one proposed by Yeovil Without Parish Council, by following our approach of allocating councillors based on the forecast electorate of each parish ward.

#### Final recommendations

Yeovil Without Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Brismore	6
Fairmead	9



## What happens next?

239 We have now completed our review of Somerset Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2027.



## Equalities

240 The Commission is satisfied that it complies with its legal obligations under the Equality Act and that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.



# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Final recommendations for Somerset Council

	<b>Division name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2024)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2031)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Avalon	1	4,465	4,465	-8%	4,631	4,631	-5%
2	Bishop's Hull & Oake	1	4,670	4,670	-4%	4,764	4,764	-2%
3	Blackdown & Neroche	1	5,403	5,403	11%	5,362	5,362	10%
4	Blackmoor Vale	1	5,253	5,253	8%	5,256	5,256	8%
5	Brendon Hills & Coast	1	4,550	4,550	-7%	4,530	4,530	-7%
6	Brent	1	4,523	4,523	-7%	4,539	4,539	-7%
7	Bridgwater Bower	1	3,817	3,817	-22%	4,730	4,730	-3%
8	Bridgwater Central	1	4,857	4,857	0%	5,242	5,242	8%
9	Bridgwater Eastover	1	5,471	5,471	12%	5,311	5,311	9%
10	Bridgwater Hamp	1	5,102	5,102	5%	5,050	5,050	4%
11	Bridgwater Kingsdown	1	4,569	4,569	-6%	5,327	5,327	9%

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2031)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12 Bridgwater Victoria & Chilton Trinity	1	5,532	5,532	14%	5,336	5,336	10%
13 Bridgwater Wembdon & Durleigh	1	3,633	3,633	-25%	5,123	5,123	5%
14 Bruton	1	4,564	4,564	-6%	4,679	4,679	-4%
15 Brympton & Preston	1	4,576	4,576	-6%	4,817	4,817	-1%
16 Burnham-on-Sea Central	1	5,016	5,016	3%	4,868	4,868	0%
17 Burnham-on-Sea North, Berrow & Brean	1	5,274	5,274	8%	5,151	5,151	6%
18 Burnham-on-Sea South & Highbridge North	1	5,232	5,232	7%	5,085	5,085	4%
19 Cannington	1	4,203	4,203	-14%	4,426	4,426	-9%
20 Castle Cary	1	5,156	5,156	6%	5,338	5,338	10%
21 Chard East	1	5,045	5,045	4%	5,044	5,044	4%
22 Chard North West	1	5,087	5,087	5%	5,214	5,214	7%
23 Chard South West	1	4,570	4,570	-6%	4,569	4,569	-6%

	Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2031)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
24	Cheddar & Axbridge	2	8,103	4,052	-17%	8,716	4,358	-10%
25	Cheddon, Kingston & Staplegrove	1	3,159	3,159	-35%	4,710	4,710	-3%
26	Chilcompton	1	4,314	4,314	-11%	5,001	5,001	3%
27	Coker	1	4,685	4,685	-4%	4,659	4,659	-4%
28	Coleford	1	4,477	4,477	-8%	4,858	4,858	0%
29	Creech & North Curry	1	5,179	5,179	6%	5,196	5,196	7%
30	Crewkerne North & Merriott	1	4,181	4,181	-14%	4,968	4,968	2%
31	Crewkerne South	1	5,290	5,290	9%	5,314	5,314	9%
32	Curry Rivel	1	4,537	4,537	-7%	4,557	4,557	-6%
33	Evercreech	1	4,956	4,956	2%	5,182	5,182	6%
34	Exmoor	1	5,452	5,452	12%	5,478	5,478	13%
35	Frome Central	1	4,867	4,867	0%	5,258	5,258	8%
36	Frome East	1	4,320	4,320	-11%	4,379	4,379	-10%
37	Frome North	1	4,349	4,349	-11%	4,369	4,369	-10%
38	Frome South	1	3,862	3,862	-21%	4,548	4,548	-7%

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2031)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
39 Frome Valley	1	5,046	5,046	4%	5,050	5,050	4%
40 Frome West	1	5,011	5,011	3%	5,174	5,174	6%
41 Glastonbury North & West Pennard	1	4,372	4,372	-10%	4,609	4,609	-5%
42 Glastonbury South & Meare	1	4,838	4,838	-1%	4,959	4,959	2%
43 Ham Hill Villages	1	4,723	4,723	-3%	4,698	4,698	-3%
44 Highbridge South	1	3,827	3,827	-21%	5,297	5,297	9%
45 Huntspill, Pawlett & Puriton	1	4,795	4,795	-1%	5,006	5,006	3%
46 Ilchester	1	4,273	4,273	-12%	4,387	4,387	-10%
47 Ilminster North	1	5,047	5,047	4%	5,113	5,113	5%
48 Ilminster South	1	4,667	4,667	-4%	4,707	4,707	-3%
49 King Alfred	1	4,956	4,956	2%	5,135	5,135	6%
50 Langport	1	5,297	5,297	9%	5,268	5,268	8%
51 Lydeard & Stogumber	1	4,764	4,764	-2%	4,854	4,854	0%
52 Martock	1	4,708	4,708	-3%	4,949	4,949	2%
53 Mendip Hills	1	4,721	4,721	-3%	4,611	4,611	-5%
54 Milborne Port	1	4,525	4,525	-7%	4,781	4,781	-2%

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2031)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
55 Minehead	2	9,198	4,599	-6%	9,341	4,671	-4%
56 Monument	1	4,665	4,665	-4%	4,817	4,817	-1%
57 North Petherton	1	4,324	4,324	-11%	4,560	4,560	-6%
58 Norton Fitzwarren & Cotford St Luke	1	4,758	4,758	-2%	4,943	4,943	2%
59 Polden Hills	1	5,288	5,288	9%	5,342	5,342	10%
60 Quantock Vale	1	4,230	4,230	-13%	4,486	4,486	-8%
61 Rodney, Westbury & Wookey	1	4,339	4,339	-11%	4,533	4,533	-7%
62 Shepton Mallet East	1	4,167	4,167	-14%	4,616	4,616	-5%
63 Shepton Mallet West & Pilton	1	5,210	5,210	7%	5,309	5,309	9%
64 Somerton	1	5,193	5,193	7%	5,313	5,313	9%
65 South Petherton	1	4,854	4,854	0%	4,855	4,855	0%
66 Stockmoor & Willstock	1	3,441	3,441	-29%	4,796	4,796	-1%
67 Street North	1	4,456	4,456	-8%	4,538	4,538	-7%
68 Street South	1	4,763	4,763	-2%	5,238	5,238	8%

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2031)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
69 Taunton Blackbrook & Holway	1	4,373	4,373	-10%	4,363	4,363	-10%
70 Taunton Comeytrowe	1	3,986	3,986	-18%	5,013	5,013	3%
71 Taunton Halcon & Lane	1	4,399	4,399	-10%	4,414	4,414	-9%
72 Taunton Lyngford	1	4,262	4,262	-12%	4,359	4,359	-10%
73 Taunton Nerrols & Pyrland	1	4,337	4,337	-11%	4,663	4,663	-4%
74 Taunton North Town & Tangier	1	4,502	4,502	-7%	4,618	4,618	-5%
75 Taunton Victoria	1	3,724	3,724	-23%	4,372	4,372	-10%
76 Taunton Vivary	1	4,401	4,401	-10%	4,510	4,510	-7%
77 Taunton Wellsprings	1	4,606	4,606	-5%	4,526	4,526	-7%
78 Taunton Wilton, Sherford & Trull	1	4,375	4,375	-10%	4,373	4,373	-10%
79 Watchet & Williton	1	5,414	5,414	11%	5,389	5,389	11%
80 Wedmore & Mark	1	4,553	4,553	-6%	4,452	4,452	-9%
81 Wellington East	1	4,858	4,858	0%	5,019	5,019	3%
82 Wellington West	1	5,024	5,024	3%	5,278	5,278	8%

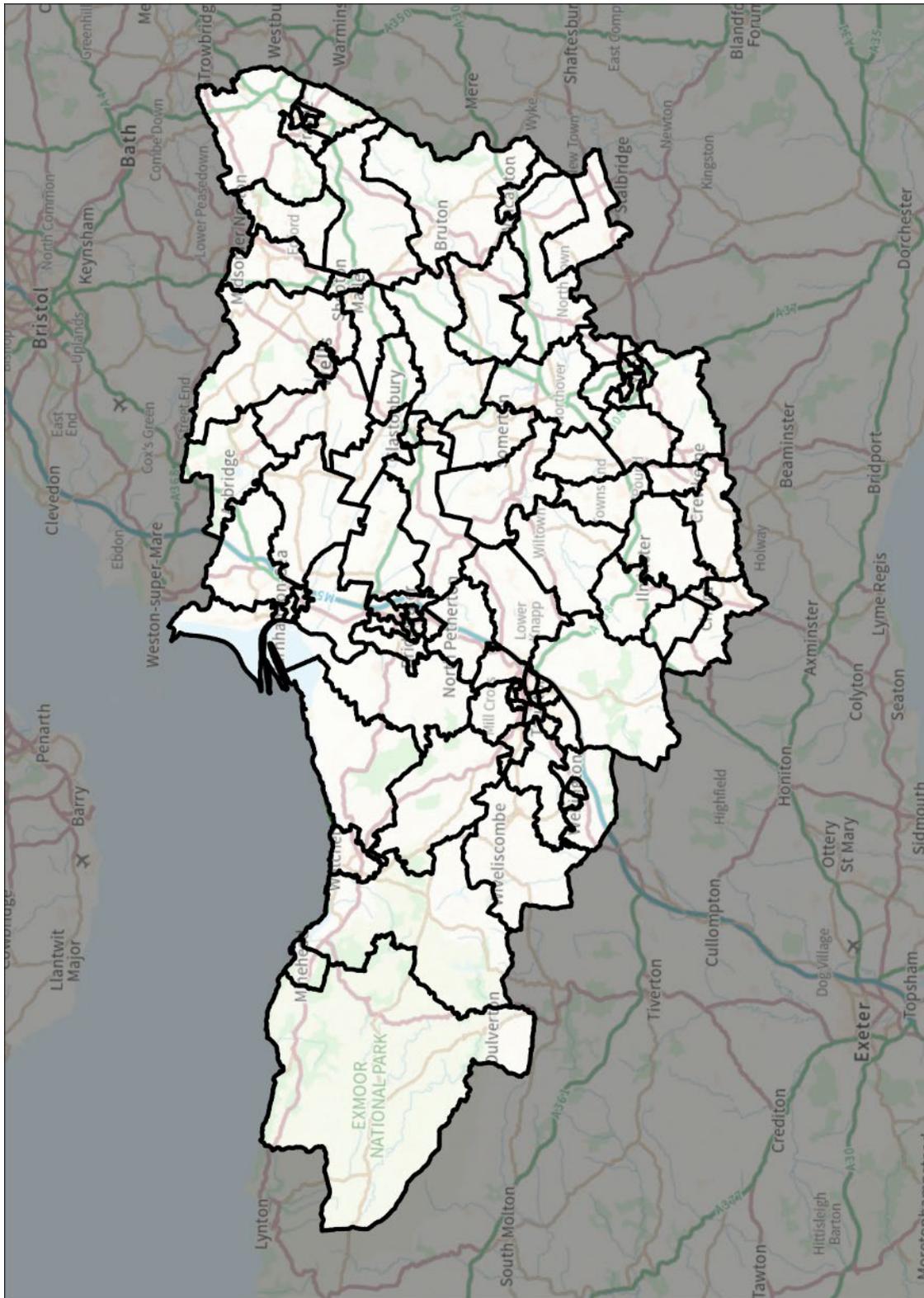
Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2031)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
83 Wells	2	8,934	4,467	-8%	9,505	4,753	-2%
84 West Monkton	1	4,623	4,623	-5%	5,110	5,110	5%
85 Wincanton	1	4,883	4,883	0%	5,300	5,300	9%
86 Wiveliscombe	1	4,983	4,983	2%	5,197	5,197	7%
87 Yeovil Central	1	5,301	5,301	9%	5,204	5,204	7%
88 Yeovil College	1	5,139	5,139	6%	5,120	5,120	5%
89 Yeovil East	1	4,617	4,617	-5%	4,585	4,585	-6%
90 Yeovil North East	1	4,783	4,783	-2%	4,861	4,861	0%
91 Yeovil North West	1	4,123	4,123	-15%	4,511	4,511	-7%
92 Yeovil South	1	4,902	4,902	1%	4,871	4,871	0%
93 Yeovil West	1	4,845	4,845	0%	4,793	4,793	-2%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>446,698</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>467,270</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,653</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,867</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Somerset Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral division varies from the average for Somerset. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

## Appendix B

### Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: [www.lqbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset](http://www.lqbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset)

## Appendix C

### Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:

[www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset)

#### *Local Authority*

- Somerset Council

#### *Political Groups*

- Bridgwater Constituency Labour Party
- Somerset Council Liberal Democrats Group x2
- Taunton and Wellington Labour Party
- Yeovil Constituency Liberal Democrats

#### *Councillors*

- Councillor S. Ashton (Somerset Council, Merriott Parish Council, West Chinnock Parish Council and Hinton St George Parish Council)
- Councillor L. Baker (Somerset Council)
- Councillor C. Booth (Wellington Town Council)
- Councillor T. Butt Philip (Somerset Council and Wells City Council)
- Councillor M. Chilcott (Somerset Council)
- Councillor T. Deakin (Somerset Council and Taunton Town Council)
- Councillor B. Filmer (Somerset Council)
- Councillor D. Fothergill (Somerset Council)
- Councillor G. Fraschini (Taunton Town Council)
- Councillor J. Graham (Henstridge Parish Council)
- Councillor A. Hadley (Somerset Council)
- Councillor H. Kay (Somerset Council) x2
- Councillor T. Kerley (Somerset Council and Somerton Town Council)
- Councillor M. Lithgow (Wellington Town Council)
- Councillor J. Lloyd (Sampford Arundel Parish Council)
- Councillor D. Mansell (Somerset Council)
- Councillor P. Manning (Glastonbury Town Council)
- Councillor S. Moran (Clatworthy Parish Council)
- Councillor M. Naughton (Trull Parish Council)
- Councillor C. Palmer (Minehead Town Council)
- Councillor D. Petheram (Henstridge Parish Council)
- Councillor F. Purbrick (Somerset Council)

- Councillor L. Redman (Somerset Council)
- Councillor D. Rodrigues (Bridgwater Town Council)
- Councillor P. Sketchley (Babcary Parish Council)
- Councillor P. Seib (Somerset Council)
- Councillor G. Slocombe (Somerset Council)
- Councillor A. Sully (Somerset Council)
- Councillor L. Trimnell (Somerset Council)
- Councillor G. Walker (Compton Dundon Parish Council)

#### *Local organisations*

- Cranborne Chase National Landscape Partnership Board
- Keyford Area Neighbourhood Group x2
- West Mendip Primary Care Network NHS x2

#### *Parish and Town Councils*

- Babcary Parish Council x2
- Badgworth Parish Council
- Baltonsborough Parish Council
- Barton St David Parish Council
- Bawdrip Parish Council
- Berkley Parish Council
- Bridgwater Town Council
- Bridgwater Without Parish Council
- Brompton Ralph Parish Council
- Brompton Regis Parish Council
- Brushford Parish Council
- Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Town Council
- Burnham Without Parish Council
- Carhampton Parish Council
- Chapel Allerton Parish Council
- Cheddar Parish Council
- Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council
- Chilthorne Domer Parish Council
- Chilton Trinity Parish Council
- Compton Dundon Parish Council
- Creech St Michael Parish Council
- Crewkerne Town Council
- Cutcombe Parish Council
- Frome Town Council x2
- Hinton St George Parish Council

- Kingston St Mary Parish Council
- Langport Town Council
- Luxborough Parish Council
- Lympsham Parish Council x2
- Mark Parish Council
- Milborne Port Parish Council
- Minehead Town Council
- Monksilver Parish Council
- Mudford Parish Council
- Muchelney Parish Meeting
- Pilton Parish Council
- Nether Stowey Parish Council
- North Cadbury & Yarlinton Parish Council
- North Curry Parish Council
- North Petherton Town Council
- North Wootton Parish Council
- Oake Parish Council
- Otterhampton Parish Council
- Over Stowey Parish Council
- Rode Parish Council
- Rodney Stoke Parish Council
- Shepton Mallet Town Council
- Skilgate Parish Meeting
- Tellisford Parish Meeting
- Timberscombe Parish Council
- Wanstrow Parish Council
- Weare Parish Council x2
- Wellington Town Council x 3
- Wells City Council
- West Monkton Parish Council x2
- Williton Parish Council x2
- Withypool & Hawkridge Parish Council
- Woolavington Parish Council
- Wootton Courtenay Parish Council
- Yeovil Without Parish Council

*Local residents*

- 100 local residents

## Appendix D

### Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Changes Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority.
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government.

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